D.he Essen-based specialty chemicals company Evonik is briefly expanding its lipid production to supply the vaccine manufacturer Biontech . The lipids that are so important for the transport of the mRNA into the cells are to be produced at the Hanau in Hesse and Dossenheim in Baden-Württemberg sites as early as the second half of the year. Biontech had just announced the start of vaccine production in the converted factory in Marburg, where 250 million doses are to be produced in the first half of the year.

Jonas Jansen

Jonas Jansen

Business correspondent in Düsseldorf.

FAZ

Facebook

Twitter

Ilka Kopplin

Ilka Kopplin

Editor in business.

FAZ

“The pandemic requires decisive action,” says Evonik boss Christian Kullmann. “We therefore do everything possible to supply our partners with critical lipids. At the same time, we are expanding our competencies and capacities along the entire value chain. "

The lipids, or, to put it simply, synthetic fats, enclose the mRNA in composite particles, which protects them on their way to the cells, where they are released. Biontech uses four different lipids, including cholesterol , for the corona vaccine jointly developed with Pfizer . There are also various salts and sugars.

Merck also produces lipids

Evonik has been a development partner for gene-based therapies for a long time, which is why the Essen-based company is involved in several vaccine development projects. In addition to lipid production, the specialty chemicals group also develops formulations in which auxiliary and active ingredients are combined. Evonik also manufactures clinical test samples, and produces and fills the substances. In addition to Evonik, the Darmstadt-based pharmaceutical company Merck also produces lipids in Germany.

Merck recently announced that it would accelerate the production of lipids for the Biontech vaccine and increase it at the end of the year. “We assume that we are talking about a few hundred kilograms per year. Although these are very small quantities for a chemical process, ” said Merck CEO Stefan Oschmann in an interview with the FAZ