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Varda Raises \$187M to Advance Drug Manufacturing in Space.

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Varda Space Industries has raised \$187 million in a Series C funding round led by Natural Capital and Shrug Capital, bringing its total funding to approximately \$329 million to advance microgravity-enabled pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Investors in the round included Lux Capital, Peter Thiel, Founders Fund, and Khosla Ventures, alongside lead investors Natural Capital and Shrug Capital.

Headquartered in El Segundo, California, Varda is at the forefront of a relatively new frontier: producing pharmaceuticals in microgravity. According to the company, the absence of gravity enables more efficient crystallization of active pharmaceutical ingredients (API), improving the structure and efficacy of certain drugs, results that are often difficult or impossible to replicate on Earth.

“With this capital, Varda will continue to increase our flight cadence and build out the pharmaceutical lab that will deliver the world’s first microgravity-enabled drug formulation,” said Will Bruey, Chief Executive Officer of Varda Space Industries, in a company statement.

During its inaugural W-1 mission in 2023, Varda grew ritonavir crystals, an HIV treatment drug, in orbit and recovered them intact, marking a successful proof-of-concept for space-based drug crystallization.

While the concept may seem futuristic, Varda’s leadership insists that space-based mass production is not as far off as it might seem. “Our current vehicles can bring back around 50 kilograms of active pharmaceutical ingredient,” said Delian Asparouhov, co-founder of Varda. “For the drugs we’re working on, that can represent a full batch of quarterly production.”

Varda has completed three successful low Earth orbit capsule missions for microgravity drug production, with a fourth in orbit and a fifth scheduled to launch by the end of 2025.

Varda has opened a new office in Huntsville, Alabama, and expanded its El Segundo lab, supporting its growth in the commercial microgravity drug manufacturing market. In an era where government space programs are increasingly reliant on private innovation, companies like Varda are proving that the next revolution in medicine may very well begin in orbit, not in the hands of bloated bureaucracy or inefficient regulatory schemes.

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