

Switzerland to stock shops with a million masks a day

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Switzerland said Wednesday it would deliver to shops a million masks a day, but insisted it would not make it mandatory to wear them as coronavirus restrictions start to ease.

The army will be used to distribute the million masks daily for the next two weeks, for stores to be able to sell to the public.

Switzerland stopped short of imposing full confinement in emergency measures introduced last month to combat the spread of the new [coronavirus](#).

But on Monday it will begin to ease the restrictions as the spread of COVID-19 has slowed.

Health Minister Alain Berset stressed at a press conference in Bern that the government "does not recommend wearing masks in everyday circumstances", adding that physical distancing and handwashing were the most effective protection measures.

Nevertheless, businesses which are due to reopen on Monday need to put in place protection plans for their customers and employees, and the government said that might involve adopting masks.

"If it becomes necessary to wear a mask as part of protection plans, it may be a good idea. Just buy these [masks](#) as you need them," said Berset.

More than 28,000 people in Switzerland have tested positive for coronavirus, while more than 1,200 have died in the landlocked European country of 8.5 million people.

The Alpine nation has announced a three-stage easing of the restrictions imposed to suppress the COVID-19 pandemic, with some shops and services allowed to reopen from Monday.

Doctors' surgeries, dentists, creches, hairdressers and massage and beauty salons will be able to reopen.

Hospitals will be able to perform all procedures, including non-urgent ones, while DIY stores, garden centres and florists will also be able to open up again.

Mourners outside the immediate family will once more be able to attend funerals, while food shops that also sell other goods will be able to reopen the whole store.

Other shops and schools will be able to return on May 11, if conditions allow.

Finally, vocational schools and universities, museums, zoos and libraries are scheduled to reopen on June 8.

Sports minister Viola Amherd said Wednesday that non-contact sports might be able to get going again in early May.

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