

Merkel 'deeply concerned' by rapid jump in coronavirus infections

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Chancellor Angela Merkel is deeply worried about sharply rising new coronavirus infections in Germany, her spokesman said Monday, urging citizens to keep to strict hygiene measures including masks if social distancing cannot be maintained.

"The development of [infection](#) numbers is of great concern to us,"

Steffen Seibert said. "We can see from some of our European friends where that could lead."

In a meeting with her CDU party's top brass, Merkel warned that new infection numbers—currently at around 2,000 a day—could leap to 19,200 daily by Christmas if the trend "continues in this way," party sources told AFP.

The chancellor's warning came a day before she is due to hold a [video conference](#) with the premiers of Germany's 16 states on the next measures to take to keep infections down.

Germany began to ease stringent measures including shop closures or limits to the numbers of people meeting from late April, after weeks of lockdown brought new infections down from the peak of around 6,000 daily.

But with travel picking up again, particularly during summer holidays, and larger gatherings taking place, contagion has returned swiftly.

During the CDU [meeting](#), Merkel also reportedly cited where priority would lie in terms of which sectors to keep open while fighting the pandemic.

"We must set priorities—keeping the economy running, schools and kindergartens open. Football is secondary," she said, according to Germany's top-selling Bild daily.

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