

EU disease agency predicts spike in COVID cases by Aug 1

July 16 2021



Image of the ultrastructural morphology exhibited by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Credit: CDC

The EU's disease agency said Friday it was predicting a sharp increase in coronavirus cases, with nearly five times as many new infections by August 1.

The expected rise in cases was linked to the highly-transmissible Delta variant, first identified in India, along with the relaxing of measures in European countries.

In its coverage area—which includes the European Union, Norway and Iceland—the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) expected to see 420 cases per 100,000 inhabitants for the week ending on August 1, up from just under 90 last week, it said in a weekly report.

By the week after, the number of new cases is expected to rise above 620 per 100,000 inhabitants.

"The current continuing deterioration of the epidemiological situation in many countries is expected to continue given the rapid increase in the Delta variant," the ECDC said in the report.

Hospitalisations and deaths are also expected, although at a slower pace, according to the ECDC, thanks to the rollout of vaccination campaigns.

Currently, hospitalisations remain stable in most countries but the number of deaths associated with COVID-19 is expected to exceed 10 per 1,000,000 inhabitants again, compared with 6.8 last week, the agency noted.

The ECDC said it was forecasting increasing cases in 20 countries and increased deaths in nine: Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg,

Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain.

"In the most affected countries, the steepest increases and highest notification rates were reported among 15 to 24-year-olds, with limited increases in persons aged over 65 years," the ECDC said in a statement.

While these figures are projection the level is in line with that seen during the peaks in the second half of 2020 and April 2021, according to the EU agency's data.

Between July 5 and 11, the number of new cases in the European Union jumped by over 60 percent, increasing for the second week in a row, according to the ECDC, due to "relaxation of non-pharmaceutical interventions and increasing spread of Delta variant" first detected in India.

Last month, the Stockholm-based agency warned that the Delta variant was on track to account for 90 percent of new cases by the end of August.

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