

Greece will start vaccinating 12-15 yr-olds in August

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Greece will open COVID-19 vaccinations to youngsters aged 12-15 in August, Health Minister Vassilis Kikilias told local television on Monday.

Vaccination for this group has been approved and will be optional, he said.

The programme is expected to start from Friday.

Maria Theodoridou, president of the country's vaccination committee, stressed that there had been a significant rise in infections among children and adolescents recently.

"The constant contamination of children is going to lead to the appearance of new variants" of the coronavirus she warned.

Some 30,000 appointments have already been made by teenagers aged 15 to 17, Kikilias said, as he called again for all Greeks to receive the jab.

"They should all go and get vaccinated, even now in the summer," he said.

The decision to extend vaccination to 12 to 15-year-olds comes as Greece grapples with a surge in coronavirus case numbers, in particular the highly infectious Delta variant.

Earlier this month, Greece's parliament passed a bill introducing mandatory vaccinations of all health workers, including those working in [retirement homes](#).

It requires all people working in retirement homes to be vaccinated by August 16 or be put on unpaid leave. The same applies for [health workers](#) in both public and [private sector](#) from September 1.

In the spring, Greece made a push to get people living on its islands vaccinated ahead of the summer tourist season, which is vital for the

local economy.

Although many island residents have been fully vaccinated, a large portion of tourism sector employees there remain hesitant, according to Greek authorities.

The popular tourist island of Mykonos, which was considered a vaccination model, was placed on red alert earlier in July, as cases jumped there.

Restrictions including a 24-hour ban on music and a 1:00-6:00 am curfew were reimposed, until being lifted on Monday.

More than 10 million [vaccine](#) doses have been administered in Greece and around 5.5 million people, out of a total population of about 10.7 million, have been fully jabbed.

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