

Tokyo sets another virus record days after Olympics begin

July 28 2021, by Mari Yamaguchi



People wearing face masks to protect against the spread of the coronavirus walk at a train station in Tokyo Wednesday, July 28, 2021. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike on Wednesday urged younger people to cooperate with measures to bring down the high number of infections and get vaccinated, saying their activities are key to slowing the surge during the Olympics. On Tuesday, the Japanese capital reported 2,848 new cases, exceeding its previous record in January. Credit: AP Photo/Koji Sasahara

Tokyo reported 3,177 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, setting an all-time high and exceeding 3,000 for the first time days after the start of the Olympics.

The new cases exceeded the earlier record of 2,848 set the previous day and brought the total for the Japanese capital to 206,745 since the pandemic began early last year.

Tokyo has been under a fourth state of emergency since July 12 ahead of the Olympics, which began last Friday despite widespread public opposition and concern that they could further worsen the outbreak.

Experts say Tokyo's surge is being propelled by the new, more contagious delta variant of the virus and there is no evidence of the disease being transmitted from Olympics participants to the [general public](#).

Nationwide, Japan reported 7,630 cases on Tuesday for a total of 882,823.

Japan has kept its cases and deaths lower than many other countries, but its vaccination campaign started very late in comparison to other large nations and there is fear that rising cases could overwhelm hospitals.

Japan's seven-day rolling average of cases is about 3.57 per 100,000 people, compared to 17.3 in the United States, 53.1 in Britain and 2.76 in India, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.



People wearing face masks to protect against the spread of the coronavirus walk through Takeshita street in Tokyo, Wednesday, July 28, 2021. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike on Wednesday urged younger people to cooperate with measures to bring down the high number of infections and get vaccinated, saying their activities are key to slowing the surge during the Olympics. Credit: AP Photo/Koji Sasahara

Japan's vaccine minister, Taro Kono, said in an interview with The Associated Press on Wednesday that there is no evidence of the coronavirus spreading from Olympic participants to Japan's population.

"I don't think there have been any cases related to the Olympic Games. So we aren't worried about that issue," he said.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike urged [younger people](#) on Wednesday to cooperate with measures to bring down the number of infections and get vaccinated, saying their activities are key to slowing the surge during the Olympics.

Koike noted that the majority of the elderly have been fully vaccinated and infections among them have largely decreased, while mostly unvaccinated younger people are now dominating new cases.

"Younger people's activity holds the key (to slowing the infections), and we need your cooperation," Koike said. "Please make sure to avoid nonessential outings and observe basic anti-infection measures, and I would like younger people to get vaccinated."



People wearing face masks to protect against the spread of the coronavirus walk on a street in Tokyo Wednesday, July 28, 2021. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike on Wednesday urged younger people to cooperate with measures to bring down the high number of infections and get vaccinated, saying their activities are key to slowing the surge during the Olympics. On Tuesday, the Japanese capital reported 2,848 new cases, exceeding its previous record in January. Credit: AP Photo/Koji Sasahara

As of Tuesday, 25.5% of the Japanese population has been fully vaccinated. The percentage of the elderly who are fully vaccinated is 68.2%, or 36 million people.

Vaccination prospects for younger people have improved, and some can get their shots organized by work places and colleges, while others still wait based on seniority. But there are also concerns over hesitancy among the young, with surveys showing many have doubts, in part due to false rumors about side effects.

Younger people have been blamed for roaming downtown areas after the requested closing hours for eateries and stores and spreading the virus. The state of emergency, which is to continue through the Olympics, mainly focuses on requiring establishments to stop serving alcohol and shorten their hours. Measures for the public are only requests and are increasingly ignored.



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People wearing face masks to protect against the spread of the coronavirus cross a street in Tokyo, Wednesday, July 28, 2021. Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike on Wednesday urged younger people to cooperate with measures to bring down the high number of infections and get vaccinated, saying their activities are key to slowing the surge during the Olympics. Credit: AP Photo/Koji Sasahara



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Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike speaks during a news conference at Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office in Tokyo Wednesday, July 28, 2021. Koike on Wednesday urged younger people to cooperate with measures to bring down the high number of infections and get vaccinated, saying their activities are key to slowing the surge during the Olympics. Credit: Kyodo News via AP

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has also urged people to avoid nonessential outings and says there is no need to consider a suspension of the Games, which are being held with no fans in Tokyo and three neighboring prefectures—Chiba, Kanagawa and Saitama.

The governors of the three areas, alarmed by Tokyo's surging cases, said on Wednesday they plan to ask Suga to place their prefectures under the state of emergency too.

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