

Israel to begin COVID booster shots for over 30s

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Israel on Tuesday lowered the age threshold to receive a third coronavirus booster dose to anyone aged 30 and above, as it continues to battle surging infections.

Israel is among a handful of nations that has decided to administer a third vaccine dose, a policy criticised by the World Health Organization, which has called for more doses to be sent to poorer states.

But Israel's [health ministry](#) announced the lowered age threshold after 9,831 new cases were registered on Monday, the highest daily tally since January.

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett has argued that given Israel's relatively small population its booster shot programme would not affect global stocks but would provide quick data on the effectiveness of a third dose, aiding the global pandemic fight.

On Tuesday, he described Israel as the "global pioneers regarding the third dose of the vaccine".

More than 5.4 million Israelis have received two shots of the Pfizer BioNTech [vaccine](#), 58 percent of the population, and more than 1.5 million people have had three shots.

Israel was one of the first countries to launch a large-scale vaccination drive which began in December and succeeded in lowering infections, but cases have spiked largely because of the highly transmissible Delta variant.

Bennett has said he is committed to avoiding another economically crippling lockdown, and believes the latest surge can be managed by expanding vaccinations and promoting mask-wearing.

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