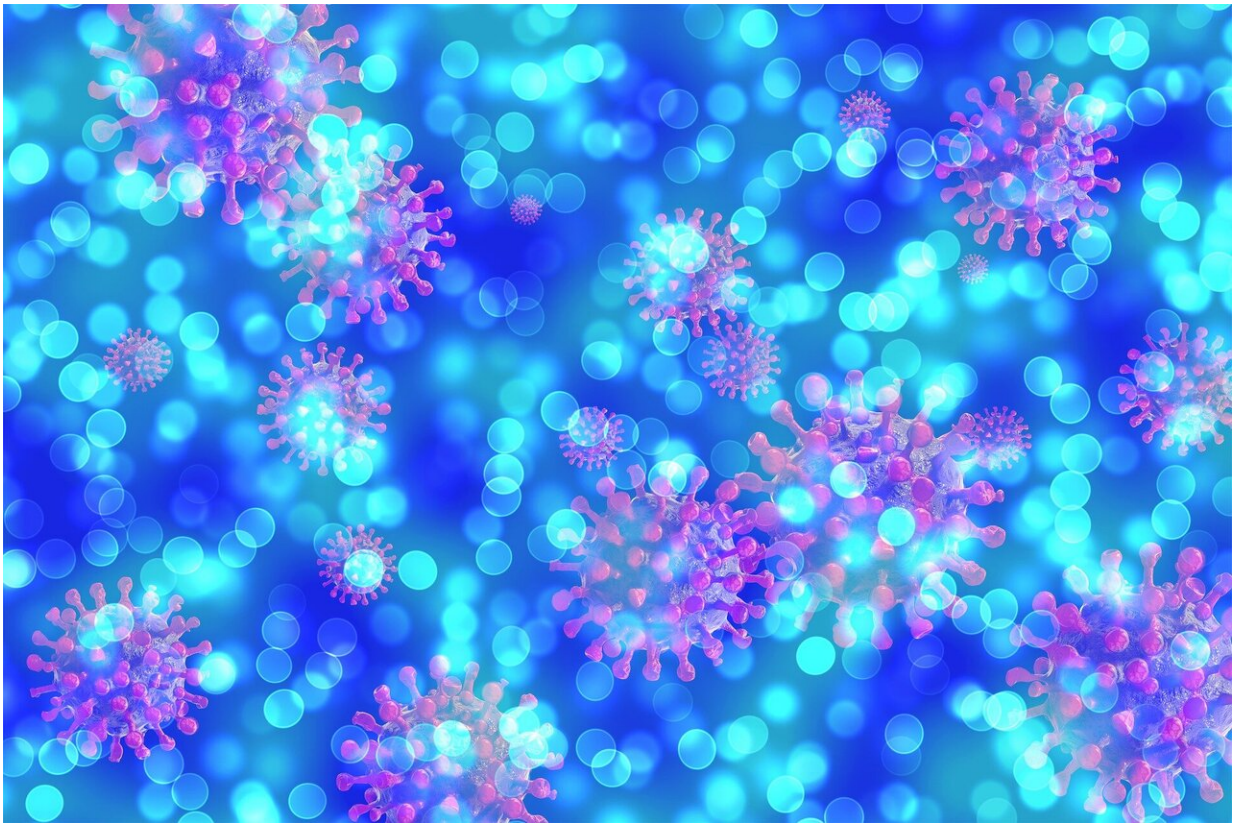


Israel sets up COVID rapid test stations nationwide

August 8 2021



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Israel set up rapid coronavirus testing stations across the country on Sunday, the Magen David Adom emergency service said, as the government tries to stave off another pandemic lockdown.

"Following a request from the Ministry of Health, Magen David Adom on Sunday opened 120 rapid detection stations," an MDA statement said.

The testing centres are aimed at the non-vaccinated and those who have recovered from the virus and need a health pass. Results are received in 15 minutes.

Since Sunday morning, [unvaccinated people](#) must present a negative COVID [test](#) less than 24 hours old, and health passes will be extended to children under 12 from August 20.

Over the past week, Israel has been recording an average of more than 3,000 new coronavirus cases a day—the highest since April.

The rise in infections is a step back after its world-leading [vaccine campaign](#) drove down new COVID-19 cases from 10,000 a day to fewer than 100.

Tests at the new stations will cost 52 shekels (\$16) and will enable those tested to receive a health ministry pass valid for 24 hours.

"Lockdown will be imposed as a last resort and we will do everything to avoid it," Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz said in a statement welcoming the launch of the rapid test service.

Last December, the country of nine million people was one of the first to launch a major vaccination campaign, thanks to an agreement with pharmaceutical giant Pfizer giving it rapid access to millions of doses in exchange for biomedical data on the effects of the vaccine.

Despite the campaign reducing the number of reported infections, contamination has risen again with the spread of the Delta variant in unvaccinated adults and in those vaccinated more than six months ago.

Israel has now launched a [campaign](#) to provide a third booster dose of vaccine to the elderly and has also reinstated the [health](#) pass.

Most COVID restrictions were lifted in early June, but some were reimposed last month following the resurgence of cases.

Only people who have been fully vaccinated, cured of COVID-19 or with a negative PCR test taken less than 72 hours previously are allowed to enter places holding more than 100 people, indoors or outdoors.

Over the past 24 hours, Israel has recorded 2,886 new cases of COVID-19. Of the 602 people in hospital because of the virus, 348 are seriously ill.

More than 6,500 people have died in Israel from coronavirus out of nearly 900,000 cases.

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