

# Belgium braces for another surge in COVID-19 cases

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In this Friday, Nov. 6, 2020 file photo, Medical personnel work in the intensive care ward for COVID-19 patients at the MontLegia CHC hospital in Liege, Belgium. The government warned Thursday, Oct. 21, 2021 that Belgium could well be on the cusp of another major surge in COVID-19 cases despite its high rate of vaccinations. Credit: AP Photo/Francisco Seco, File

Belgium's government warned Thursday that the country could well be on the cusp of another major surge in COVID-19 cases despite its high vaccination rate.

Though the government recently relaxed the mandatory use of facemasks, it is again starting to encourage the population to use them to counter a rise in cases reminiscent of the first three surges of the past 1 1/2 years.

"We are clearly in a fourth wave," Health Minister Frank Vandenbroucke told the VRT network. "We will see a major increase in infections and, unfortunately, [hospital admissions](#)."

The [government](#) has this month loosened some restrictions, including allowing for more indoor events and dropping requirements for customers to wear masks in bars.

Belgium, a nation of 11 million, again has over 3,000 infections a day, an increase of 50% compared to the week earlier. Hospital admissions are at 80 a day now, an increase of over 40%.

Even if the total numbers are still manageable, there are worries about the curve spiking again, even though 85 percent of the [adult population](#) is vaccinated.



In this May 6, 2021 file photo, Belgian doctor Peter Theerens administers the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine to an elderly patient during a house call in Antwerp, Belgium. The government warned Thursday, Oct. 21, 2021 that Belgium could well be on the cusp of another major surge in COVID-19 cases despite its high rate of vaccinations. Credit: AP Photo/Virginia Mayo, File

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