

Belgium reimposes restrictions as COVID-19 cases spike

October 26 2021, by Raf Casert



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, right, and Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo speak prior to a conference on biotech at the Residence Palace in Brussels, Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. More than 100 Belgian and international executives from the health and biotech sector met in Brussels Tuesday to discuss a forward looking process in the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines. Credit: AP Photo/Virginia Mayo

With coronavirus infections and hospitalizations shooting upward, the Belgian government on Tuesday reimposed some pandemic restrictions that it only relaxed a few weeks ago and expanded a nationwide use of the COVID-19 pass.

Daily infections in the European Union nation of 11 million increased 75% to reach 5,299 cases over the past last week. Hospitalizations have increased 69% to reach 102 daily cases. Deaths have increased slightly, with an average of 13 a day.

"As of Friday, there will be [face masks](#) in [public places](#) and they will be mandatory for staff of bars, restaurants and fitness clubs," Prime Minister Alexander De Croo said. "We need to raise our walls of protection."

He added that the country's COVID-19 pass will have to be shown to enter bars, restaurants and fitness clubs as of next week. The passport shows you are either fully vaccinated, have had a recent negative test or have recently recovered from the disease.

De Croo said the new moves still stopped well short of going into a lockdown. He said because over 85% of Belgian adults are vaccinated, measures did not have to be as drastic as those previously in the pandemic.

"Last year, in a situation like this, we would be locking down certain activities," he said. "What we do today is keep everything open, using a vaccination passport or using masks."



Belgium's Prime Minister Alexander De Croo addresses a conference on biotech at the Residence Palace in Brussels, Tuesday, Oct. 26, 2021. More than 100 Belgian and international executives from the health and biotech sector met in Brussels Tuesday to discuss a forward looking process in the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines. Credit: AP Photo/Virginia Mayo

A complicating factor has emerged in the high virus transmission rate in Belgian primary schools. The government research institute Sciensano found that more than 1 in 4 pupils there have antibodies to the virus.

Similar discussions about possibly increasing anti-virus measures are being held in the Netherlands, where the [government](#) is seeking advice from experts on whether it needs to reintroduce [pandemic](#) restrictions amid sharply rising [infection](#) rates. The Netherlands has one of the

fastest rising infection rates in Europe.

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Citation: Belgium reimposes restrictions as COVID-19 cases spike (2021, October 26) retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-10-belgium-reimposes-restrictions-covid-cases.html>

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