

Dutch government looking at reintroducing COVID-19 measures

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The Dutch government is seeking advice from a panel of experts on whether it needs to reintroduce COVID-19 restrictions amid sharply rising infection rates, the health minister said Monday.

The Netherlands has one of the fastest-rising infection rates in Europe. The 7-day rolling average of daily new cases increased over the past two

weeks from 13.43 new cases per 100,000 people to 29.27 new cases per 100,000 people on Oct. 24.

"It's just going too fast. We have to face up to the fact that the numbers are rising faster and sooner than expected," Health Minister Hugo De Jonge told reporters in The Hague. He said [hospital admissions](#) also are rising faster than anticipated when the [government](#) relaxed its lockdown last month.

"The Cabinet will have to think about extra measures," he said.

The Netherlands [ended almost all COVID-19 restrictions](#) on Sept. 25, including an end to social distancing. At the same time, the government mandated use of coronavirus health passes to get into bars, restaurants, cinemas and other public venues.

De Jonge said that a press conference will be held next Tuesday to announce the next steps. The government had planned its press conference for next Friday.

More than 18,000 people in the Netherlands are confirmed to have died of COVID-19, though the true death toll is thought to be higher.

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