

Austria orders nationwide lockdown for the unvaccinated

November 14 2021, by Kirsten Grieshaber



Austrian Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg addresses the media in the Federal Chancellery in Vienna, Austria, Oct. 11, 2021. The Austrian government ordered a nationwide lockdown for unvaccinated people starting midnight Sunday, Nov. 14, 2021, to slow the fast spread of the coronavirus in the country. Credit: AP Photo/Lisa Leutner, File

The Austrian government has ordered a nationwide lockdown for unvaccinated people starting at midnight Sunday to combat rising coronavirus infections and deaths.

The move prohibits [unvaccinated people](#) 12 and older from leaving their homes except for basic activities such as working, grocery shopping, going for a walk—or getting vaccinated.

Authorities are concerned about rising infections and deaths and that soon [hospital staff](#) will no longer be able to handle the growing influx of COVID-19 patients.

"It's our job as the government of Austria to protect the people," Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg told reporters in Vienna on Sunday. "Therefore we decided that starting Monday ... there will be a [lockdown](#) for the unvaccinated."

The lockdown affects about 2 million people in the Alpine country of 8.9 million, the APA news agency reported. It doesn't apply to children under 12 because they cannot yet [officially get vaccinated](#).

The lockdown will initially last for 10 days and police will go on patrol to check people outside to make sure they are vaccinated, Schallenberg said, adding that additional forces will be assigned to the patrols.

Unvaccinated people can be fined up to 1,450 euros (\$1,660) if they violate the lockdown.



The patient Kurt Switil, left, receives a Pfizer vaccination against the COVID-19 disease by a doctor in the vaccination center 'Am Schoepfwerk' in Vienna, Austria, April 10, 2021. The Austrian government ordered a nationwide lockdown for unvaccinated people starting midnight Sunday, Nov. 14, 2021, to slow the fast spread of the coronavirus in the country. Credit: AP Photo/Lisa Leutner, File

Austria has one of the lowest vaccination rates in Western Europe: only around 65% of the total population is fully vaccinated. In recent weeks, Austria has faced a worrying rise in infections. Authorities reported 11,552 new cases on Sunday; a week ago there were 8,554 new daily infections.

Deaths have also been increasing in recent weeks. On Sunday, 17 new

deaths were reported. Overall, Austria's pandemic [death](#) toll stands at 11,706, APA reported.

The seven-day infection rate stands at 775.5 new cases per 100,000 inhabitants. In comparison, the rate is at 289 in neighboring Germany, which has already also sounded the alarm over the rising numbers.

Schallenberg pointed out that while the seven-day [infection](#) rate for vaccinated people has been falling in recent days, the rate is rising quickly for the unvaccinated.

"The rate for the unvaccinated is at over 1,700, while for the vaccinated it is at 383," the chancellor said.



A patient is vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus on the national holiday in the Vienna Imperial Palace in the marble hall in Vienna, Austria, Oct. 26, 2021. Austrian broadcaster ORF reported that about 200 kids between the ages of five and 11 can get vaccinated with Pfizer/BioNTech as part of a pilot project in the Austrian capital starting Monday. The pilot project is limited to Vienna only and doesn't apply to the rest of the Alpine country. Credit: AP Photo/Lisa Leutner, File

Schallenberg also called on people who have been vaccinated to get their booster shot, saying that otherwise "we will never get out of this vicious circle."

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This story corrects that the lockdown applies to 12 and older, not just over 12.

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