

COVID-19 deaths in Russia hit record for 2nd straight day

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Coronavirus deaths in Russia hit record highs for the second straight day Thursday, while new daily cases appeared to be taking a downward trend but still remained higher than during previous waves of the pandemic.

Russia's state coronavirus [task](#) force reported that 1,251 people died of COVID-19 since the day before, the most since Russia had its first virus outbreak in March 2020. The previous record of 1,247 deaths was recorded Wednesday.

The task force also reported 37,374 new confirmed cases. Until this week, Russian authorities had recorded higher daily case numbers since late October.

Health experts have blamed the latest surge in infections and deaths on low vaccination rates and lax public attitudes toward taking precautions. Fewer than 40% of Russia's nearly 146 million people have been fully vaccinated, even though the country approved a domestically developed COVID-19 vaccine months before most of the world.

To boost immunization rates, the government said new restrictions would take effect next year and limit access to many [public places](#), as well as domestic and international trains and flights, to those who have been fully vaccinated, have recovered from COVID-19 or are medically exempt from vaccination.

Officials have urged Russians to get vaccinated in the meantime.

In total, the coronavirus task force has reported over 9.2 million confirmed infections and more than 260,000 COVID-19 deaths, by far the highest [death](#) toll in Europe. Some experts believe the true figure is even higher.

Reports by Russia's statistical service, Rosstat, that tally coronavirus-linked deaths retroactively reveal much higher mortality. They say 462,000 people with COVID-19 died between April 2020 and September of this year.

Russian officials have said the task [force](#) only includes deaths for which COVID-19 was the main cause, and uses data from medical facilities. Rosstat uses wider criteria for counting virus-related deaths and takes its numbers from civil registry offices where registering a death is finalized.

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