

Dutch government tightens COVID-19 measures again

November 2 2021, by Mike Corder



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Faced with sharply rising coronavirus cases, the caretaker prime minister of the Netherlands said Tuesday that the Dutch government is reinstating an order to wear face masks in public places like stores and

libraries and mandating an extension for the use of COVID-19 passes.

COVID-19 cases have increased rapidly in the Netherlands for weeks. The country's public [health](#) institute reported Tuesday that confirmed infections rose 39% compared to the week before and hospital admissions were up 31%. The [upward trend](#) began soon after the government ended most remaining lockdown restrictions in late September.

"It won't surprise anybody that we again have a tough message this evening," Prime Minister Rutte said during a nationally televised press conference. "Tough because we unfortunately have to ask more of people now that the infection numbers and hospital numbers are rising quickly."

Rutte also urged people to socially distance, work from home at least half the time, and to avoid travel to busy places and during the morning and evening rush hours.

As part of the new restrictions, students will have to wear [face masks](#) at school when they walk between classes. The new mask rules and requirements for COVID passes to be shown at more public locations, including museums and [theme parks](#), are set to come into force on Saturday.

Rutte also appealed for calm in the polarized debate between supporters and opponents of COVID-19 measures.

"Because we have to do this together," he said. He urged "a little understanding for one another's opinion and for every situation, with mildness toward each other."

As Rutte spoke, a group of opponents of the measures demonstrated

outside. Police said some threw fireworks at officers.

Earlier Tuesday, the Dutch health council advised the government to begin giving COVID-19 vaccine booster shots to everyone age 60 and older and to nursing home residents. The health council said it was seeing indications that COVID-19 protection was waning among [older people](#).

"To get ahead of an increase in serious illness, the council advises the health minister to start offering boosters now," the council said.

Health Minister Hugo de Jonge said the government would follow the advice and begin offering booster shots, first to people over 80 and to [health care workers](#).

Other European countries already have begun giving booster shots. France started giving [boosters to people over 65](#) two months ago.

Just under 80% of adults in the Netherlands are fully vaccinated. The government already has begun giving booster shots to people with severely compromised immune systems.

Infections among nursing home residents rose to the highest level since the start of February, the public health institute said.

The COVID-19 pandemic has killed nearly 18,500 people in the Netherlands.

A week ago, neighboring Belgium also [ratcheted up its COVID-19 restrictions](#) amid a spike in infections.

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Dutch government tightens COVID-19 measures again (2021, November 2) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-11-dutch-tightens-covid-.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.