

German COVID infection rate at new high as vaccinations slow

November 8 2021, by Geir Moulson



A face mask was left back on the Roemerberg square in Frankfurt, Saturday, Nov.. 6, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst

Germany's coronavirus infection rate climbed to its highest recorded

level yet on Monday as what officials have called a "pandemic of the unvaccinated" gathers pace.

The national disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, said the country has seen 201.1 new cases per 100,000 residents over the past seven days. That was above the previous record of 197.6 from Dec. 22 last year. While it's still a lower rate than in several other European countries, it has set alarm bells ringing.

The seven-day infection rate has long ceased to be the only policy yardstick in Germany, with new hospital admissions now an important factor. Those are currently at just under 4 per 100,000 residents over a week—compared with a peak of about 15.5 last Christmas—but officials say hospitals are filling up in badly affected areas.

The disease control center said Monday that 15,513 new COVID-19 cases were reported over the past 24 hours—down from a record 37,120 on Friday, but figures are typically lower after the weekend. Another 33 deaths were recorded, bringing Germany's total to 96,558.

Germany has struggled to find ways to pep up its much-slowed vaccination campaign. At least 67% of the population of 83 million is fully vaccinated, according to official figures, which authorities say isn't enough. Unlike some other European countries, it has balked at making vaccinations mandatory for any professional group.

As at many times during the pandemic, Germany has a patchwork of regional rules. Most places restrict access to many indoor facilities and events to people who have been vaccinated, have recovered or been tested—with the latter now being excluded in some areas. Those rules are often enforced laxly.

Rules on whether schoolchildren must wear masks in class vary from

state to state.

Free rapid tests for all were scrapped nearly a month ago in an effort to incentivize more people to get vaccinated. There are now widespread calls for them to be reintroduced. And officials now advocate [booster vaccinations](#) for everyone who got their initial shots six months ago or more.

Germany currently has a caretaker national government after its election in September. The parties that are expected to form the next government plan to bring legislation to parliament this week that would allow an "epidemic situation of national scope," in place since March 2020, [to expire](#) at the end of the month but provide a new legal framework for coronavirus measures.

There has been criticism of that decision. But Katrin Goering-Eckardt, the parliamentary leader of one of those parties, the Greens, told ARD television that "we need to create measures now that can't be questioned by courts."

She argued that, with two-thirds of residents vaccinated, the current rules weren't legally waterproof.

Schools and other facilities can be closed if necessary, but "with so many people vaccinated, we won't be able legally to do a complete lockdown for those who are vaccinated," Goering-Eckardt said.

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