

# German disease control head warns of 'terrible Christmas'

November 18 2021

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A sign reminds of mandatory face masks at the train station in Cologne, Germany, Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021. Germany's disease control agency reported 52,826 new coronavirus cases Wednesday as infection rates continue to climb. Credit: AP Photo/Martin Meissner

The head of Germany's disease control agency has warned that the country faces a "really terrible Christmas" unless steps are taken to counter the sharp rise in coronavirus infections.

German lawmakers are debating measures Thursday that would replace the nationwide epidemic rules, which will expire at the end of the month.

The Robert Koch Institute, Germany's disease control agency, said Thursday that 65,371 newly confirmed cases had been reported in a single day, continuing the [upward trend](#) that experts have been warning about for weeks.

"We are currently heading toward a serious emergency," the agency's director, Lothar Wieler, said. "We are going to have a really terrible Christmas if we don't take countermeasures now."

Wieler said Germany needs to increase its vaccination rates to significantly above 75%, from 67.7% at present. Some regions in Germany have vaccination rates as low as 57.6%.

He also called for the closure of clubs and bars, an end to large-scale events and access to many parts of public life to be limited to those with vaccine or recovery certificates.



A medical worker carries out a rapid test in a test mobile in Frankfurt, early Wednesday, Nov. 17, 2021. Numbers of the coronavirus infections in Germany reached a new record high on Wednesday. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst



A woman walks past an abandoned Coronavirus testing center in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021. COVID-19 infections in Germany reached a new record high on Thursday. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst



German health minister Jens Spahn has taken his seat for a parliament Bundestag session about new measures to battle the coronavirus pandemic at the Reichstag building in Berlin, Germany, Tuesday, Nov. 16, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Markus Schreiber

Wieler warned that hospitals across Germany are struggling to find beds for COVID-19 patients and those with other illnesses.

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