

Germany seeks to break COVID momentum amid new case records

November 6 2021, by Geir Moulson



Medical staff members treat a coronavirus patient in the ICU of the Asklepios Clinic in Munich, Germany, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021 as the country has been experiencing an increasing number of COVID-19 cases. Credit: Peter Kneffel/dpa via AP

Germany recorded its second consecutive daily record for new

coronavirus cases on Friday as infections pick up across Europe, and its disease control center said unvaccinated people now face a "very high" risk of infection.

The country saw 37,120 reported new infections over the past 24 hours, according to the disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute. That compared with Thursday's figure of 33,949—which in turn topped the previous record of 33,777 set on Dec. 18 last year.

While it's possible that the figures were pushed up by delayed testing and reporting following a regional holiday Monday in some of the worst-affected areas, they underlined a steady rise in infections over recent weeks. Another 154 deaths linked to COVID-19 brought Germany's total to 96,346 on Friday.

The country's [infection](#) rate has now exceeded its peak during a spike of cases in the spring, though it's still short of the worst-ever showing in December, according to Friday's figures. There have been 169.9 reported cases per 100,000 residents over the past seven days, up from 139.2 a week ago.

That's still a lower rate than in several other European countries, but it is ringing alarm bells. Officials point to a large number of [unvaccinated people](#) and to often-lax enforcement of regional rules, which restrict access to some indoor activities and venues to people who have been vaccinated, have recently recovered or been tested.



Head physician Lorenz Nowak treats a coronavirus patient in the ICU of the Asklepios Clinic in Munich, Germany, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021 as the country has been experiencing an increasing number of COVID-19 cases. Credit: Peter Kneffel/dpa via AP

In a weekly report late Thursday, the Robert Koch Institute said unvaccinated or partly vaccinated people now face a "very high" risk to their health—a change from its previous assessment that they face a "high" risk. "For fully vaccinated people, the threat is considered moderate, but rising in view of the increasing infection figures," it added.

"It is important to break the momentum" of infections, Bavaria's state health minister, Klaus Holetschek, said after chairing a previously

scheduled meeting with his federal and regional counterparts. In decentralized Germany, state governments bear the primary responsibility for imposing and loosening restrictions.

Holetschek said officials agreed that booster shots should in principle be available to everyone six months after they have completed their initial course of vaccination, and that obligatory testing at nursing homes—including of vaccinated visitors—should be expanded.



A woman receives her first vaccination in the so called "vaccination express" tram in central Frankfurt, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021. About 100 people are vaccinated every day in two trams. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst

Authorities also are appealing anew to German residents who haven't yet been vaccinated to get their shots. They say pressure on hospital beds is rising, particularly in regions where vaccination rates are relatively low.

Official figures show that about two-thirds of Germany's population of 83 million has completed its first round of vaccination, but there are significant regional variations. Authorities say 16.2 million people aged 12 or above remain unvaccinated, including 3.2 million over-60s.

"I'm sure all of us thought in the spring and summer that the number of people who simply don't want to be vaccinated would be smaller, but it is how it is," said Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert. "However, we must now continue to work with information, clarification and all our good arguments."



An 85-year-old man receives a booster vaccination in the so called "vaccination express" tram in central Frankfurt, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021. About 100 people are vaccinated every day in two trams. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst



Students wear mouth-to-nose coverings while sitting close to each other during the lecture 'BWL 1' in lecture hall H1 of the Westfaelische Wilhelms-Universitaet in Muenster, Germany, Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2021. Germany's disease control agency has reported the highest number of new infections with the coronavirus since the outbreak of the pandemic. Credit: Rolf Vennenbernd/dpa via AP

A bit more than 2 million booster shots have been administered so far, a number that also falls short of officials' hopes.

"Boosters after six months should become the rule, not the exception," federal Health Minister Jens Spahn said.

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