

Portugal returns to COVID restrictions despite high jab rate

November 25 2021



Two women wearing face masks walk along a street in Lisbon, Thursday, Nov. 25, 2021. Portugal is reporting its highest number of new daily COVID-19 infections since July amid a surge in cases across Europe. The Portuguese government is due to announce on Thursday what new pandemic restrictions it is introducing, seven weeks after scrapping almost all of them due to the high vaccination rate. Credit: AP Photo/Armando Franca

Portugal is bringing back some tight pandemic restrictions, less than two months after scrapping most of them when the goal of vaccinating 86% of the population against COVID-19 was reached.

A recent rise in coronavirus infections compelled the government to act, Prime Minister António Costa said Thursday, though he noted that his country hasn't seen a surge on the scale witnessed elsewhere in Europe.

From Dec. 1, wearing a [face mask](#) will once again be mandatory in enclosed spaces; a digital certificate proving vaccination or recovery from the coronavirus must be shown to enter restaurants, cinemas and hotels; and even inoculated people must have a negative test to visit hospitals, elderly care homes, [sports events](#) and bars and discos.

Furthermore, everyone arriving on a flight from abroad must present a negative test result.

The government also recommended regular self-testing and working from home whenever possible.

The rollout of booster shots is being stepped up, Costa said.

The measures are needed, Costa said, because of the surge in cases in some other EU countries, because the approaching winter commonly brings more respiratory infections, and because families will be in close contact at Christmas.



A woman wearing a face mask crosses a street in Lisbon, Thursday, Nov. 25, 2021. Portugal is reporting its highest number of new daily COVID-19 infections since July amid a surge in cases across Europe. The Portuguese government is due to announce on Thursday what new pandemic restrictions it is introducing, seven weeks after scrapping almost all of them due to the high vaccination rate. Credit: AP Photo/Armando Franca

Authorities say there is currently no need for another lockdown in Portugal, as hospitals are coping.

The General Directorate for Health officially reported 3,150 new cases Thursday, with 691 people in hospital, 103 in intensive care units and 15 deaths. The number of patients requiring hospitalization was the highest since September.

On Nov. 1, Portugal reported fewer than 500 new infections, 360 people hospitalized, 60 in intensive care and five deaths. Those numbers were similar to those a month earlier.

Almost 18,400 people have died of COVID-19 in the country of around 10.3 million.

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