

Sweden offers COVID-19 booster shot to those ages 18 to 65

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Sweden recommended Wednesday that everyone between the ages of 18 and 65 should get a booster shot against COVID-19 six months after having received the second jab.

Social Affairs Minister Lena Hallengren said about 7 million people in Sweden, which has a population of 10 million, have had both shots. But she expressed concern about the uptick in coronavirus infections.

"The government takes the spread of [infection](#) around the world seriously," Hallengren said. "The purpose (of offering a third shot) is to be prepared for a possible deteriorating situation."

Karin Tegmark Wisell, head of the Swedish Public Health Agency, said the vaccine was "our most important tool for dealing with the [pandemic](#)."

"Two shots provide good protection against serious illness and death, but the protective effect diminishes over time," she told a news conference.

Sweden had previously stood out among European nations for its comparatively hands-off response to the pandemic. All people above age 65 have already been offered a third shot. Authorities say 26% in that age group has received a booster so far.

The Scandinavian country hasn't gone into a lockdown or closed businesses during the pandemic, relying instead on citizens' sense of civic duty to control infections. Authorities have emphasized individual responsibility instead of government health measures.

Last week, Sweden said it would introduce a digital COVID-19 vaccination certificate for public gatherings and events with more than 100 people indoors. The move follows similar steps by other European Union countries amid a recent continental rise in COVID-19 cases.

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