Vienna tightens coronavirus restrictions

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Austrian capital Vienna said Thursday it would tighten coronavirus restrictions to only allow those vaccinated or recovered from COVID-19 to enter restaurants, go to hairdressers and attend bigger gatherings.

The new rules come as the daily surge in cases nationwide hit a record

high for 2021, at almost 8,600 infections.

"The situation in all of Austria is serious," Vienna mayor Michael Ludwig told a press conference as he announced the stricter rules for the capital.

From the end of next week negative COVID tests will no longer be sufficient to enter restaurants, for services with close contact such as at hairdressers and for gatherings of 25 people or more, he said.

Austria's vaccination rate has stagnated at 64 percent of its almost nine million people, below the EU-wide average of almost 67 percent.

Two provinces have launched lotteries—with cars as prizes in the state of Burgenland—as part of their vaccination campaigns.

So far, more than 11,400 people infected with the new coronavirus have died in the Alpine EU member.

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