

Belgium to reinforce measures to contain pandemic on Friday

December 2 2021



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The Belgian government has vowed to reinforce measures to contain the coronavirus even more with fresh measures to be decided Friday, possibly including more school closures and further reducing opening

times of bars and restaurants.

Local media said Friday's possible measures also include further cuts in indoor sports events, and reducing group meetings to 200 people at most.

"We have to reinforce the dikes—keep reinforcing them," Health Minister Frank Vandenbroucke told Parliament. "At a certain point you really have to make them strong enough and that is the challenge for Friday." It will be the third time Belgium has beefed up measures in less than a month to contain the latest spike in cases.

Over the past few weeks, the number of cases and [hospital admissions](#) has exceeded at times even the worst medical predictions. Last Friday, the government reinforced measures for the second time in little more than a week and closed night clubs, while bars and restaurants have to shut at 11 p.m. for the next three weeks.

Under proposals from experts, that could be pushed back to 8 p.m.

The latest figures in the nation of 11 million show that on a weekly average, there are 17,917 new cases a day. Hospital admission are up 9% a day, and ICU patients now total 792 for a rise of 20% on a weekly basis.

In all, 75% of the Belgian population is fully vaccinated, one of the highest percentages in the 27-nation EU. "We thought that it would fully buttress our wall of defense," said Prime Minister Alexander De Croo. "We have to recognize that we were wrong," he said, as he acknowledged more measures would be needed.

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