

Cyprus OKs COVID-19 vaccinations for children aged 5-11

December 13 2021



A boy with his father, left, waits for a rapid coronavirus test as a woman, right, is tested, in a temporary facility outside a pharmacy in Lakatamia a suburb of Nicosia, Cyprus, Monday, Dec. 13, 2021. Cyprus will start vaccinating children between 5-11 the government said on Monday in a fresh bid to head off another COVID-19 infection surge following the first confirmed cases of the omicron variant appearing on the east Mediterranean island nation. Credit: AP Photo/Petros Karadjias

Cyprus will start vaccinating kids between the ages of 5 to 11, the government said Monday in fresh bid to head off another COVID-19 surge following the first confirmed cases of the omicron variant on the eastern Mediterranean island nation.

Health Minister Michalis Hadjipantela also said individuals can receive booster shots two weeks sooner than the previously mandatory six-month waiting period after their second vaccine shot.

New measures announced after a Cabinet meeting also tightened restrictions aimed at infected individuals or anyone qualifying as a close contact.

Hadjipantela said anyone diagnosed with the omicron variant or any other new mutation will have to undergo compulsory isolation at their usual residence.

Close contacts will be required to undergo a rapid antigen test within 72 hours and a PCR test a week later. Booster shot recipients are exempted.

Meanwhile, the country's SafePass—or proof of vaccination—will be revoked as of Wednesday for anyone not receiving a booster shot within seven months of completing their inoculation.

Also as of this week, unvaccinated people will be barred from attending christenings, weddings and hotel receptions on top of an earlier decision to exclude them from stadiums, cinemas, theaters and nightclubs.



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Hadjipantela renewed his appeal for everyone eligible to be vaccinated instead of acting "selfishly" or "irresponsibly."

Between Nov. 23 and Dec. 6, the infection rate in the internationally recognized Greek Cypriot south of the ethnically divided island was 753 per 100,000 people. Overall, 606 people with COVID-19 have died here

in the pandemic.

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