

France weighs new Covid restrictions in Omicron fight

December 27 2021

French President Emmanuel Macron is expected to announce new COVID measures on Monday as the country braces for a new surge in cases due to the rapidly spreading Omicron variant.

Officials have warned that hospitals again risk being overwhelmed after a record 100,000 cases were reported Saturday, the highest daily level in France since the pandemic began nearly two years ago.

Health experts have estimated the number of daily cases could increase rapidly by mid-January, even though millions of people have received booster shots in recent weeks.

Nearly 3,300 people are currently in intensive care, again above the crisis threshold of 3,000 set by authorities for handling the worst cases.

Macron will hold a crisis meeting at 4:00 pm (1500 GMT) via videoconference from his Mediterranean holiday retreat at Bregancon with key members of his cabinet and representatives of French public [health](#) bodies.

One measure under consideration is to restrict the country's COVID health pass, which is required to enter restaurants, cinemas and other public venues, only to people who are fully vaccinated—and no longer also to those with a recent negative test.

The pass as well as a negative test could also be required for bars or

cafes without table seating, and possibly for nightclubs if they are allowed to reopen in January after a four-week closure ordered on December 6.

Some doctors have also suggested a curfew for New Year's Eve, while a group of health workers want to postpone the return of students to schools after the holidays, set for January 3.

Masks could also be required when outside, a measure already imposed in the Savoie region in the French Alps, and in other European countries.

Officials have been urging people not to hold parties or large family gatherings over the holidays, and some 22 million people out of an eligible 40 million have received COVID booster shots.

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