

France pushes vaccination campaign as virus cases increase

December 12 2021



A woman wears a face mask to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 as she walk past in front the City Hall, in Paris, Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021. Credit: AP Photo/Rafael Yaghobzadeh

Authorities in France want to accelerate vaccinations against the coronavirus before Christmas as infections surge and more people with COVID-19 seek medical attention.

"People can celebrate Christmas normally, but we must respect the rules...and get vaccinated," French Prime Minister Jean Castex told public radio outlet France Blue during an interview in the Alsace region late Friday.

France has registered a daily average of more than 44,000 new cases over the last week, a 36% increase from the previous week, according to the latest government figures. Weekly hospitalizations of people with COVID-19 went up 1,120, a 41% rise.

The government on Monday closed nightclubs until Jan.6 and tightened social distancing measures in closed spaces and outdoors. Castex said the government is not considering another lockdown that would limit or prohibit public events and social gatherings.

With over 48 million of France's 67 million [people](#) fully vaccinated and tens of thousands signing up for either their first shots or booster doses, the country could make it through the [holiday season](#) without additional restrictions on public life, the prime minister said.

Health workers in France administer 700,000 [vaccine doses](#) a day, Castex said, adding that 90% of French residents have had at least one vaccine dose.

"It's an excellent figure," he said.

The government is discussing whether to have France join other countries that have authorized vaccines for all children ages 5-11. Children under age 12 who are considered at risk of complications from

COVID-19 will be eligible starting Dec. 15.

Castex, 56, tested positive for the coronavirus on Nov. 22. His office said at the time that he had contracted the virus from his 11-year-old daughter. He was fully vaccinated, but his daughter was too young to get jabbed.

Pointing to himself as an example, the [prime minister](#) said: "So yes, vaccinating children is necessary."

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This version has been corrected to show that children 12 and up already are eligible for vaccines in France.

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