

German health minister expects virus surge around New Year's

December 23 2021



Police officers try to stop a demonstration march of opponents of the Corona policy in front of the main train station in Munich, Germany, Wednesday, Dec. 22, 2021. Nearly 3000 opponents of the Corona measures demonstrated in Munich on Wednesday. Germany's health minister said Thursday that he expects a surge in coronavirus cases around the New Year period, and people will likely need a fourth shot of vaccine to maintain the best immune response against COVID-19. Credit: Lennart Preiss/dpa via AP

Germany's health minister said Thursday that he expects a surge in coronavirus cases around New Year's and people will likely need a fourth vaccine shot to maintain the best immune response against COVID-19.

Shortly later the national disease control center said the country has now recorded its first death of someone with the new omicron variant.

Health Minister Karl Lauterbach told public radio network WDR 2 that Germany hasn't yet seen a big, rapid wave of new infections from omicron like some other European countries.

"That will change around New Year and in the first week of January," Lauterbach said.

The national disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, said that 3,198 COVID-19 cases in Germany were attributed to omicron as of Wednesday, a 25% increase compared with the previous day. It also said that one person with omicron has now died, though it gave no details other than to say that the person was aged between 60 and 79.

The government is urging Germans to limit their contacts over the holiday period and to [get vaccinated, including with booster shots](#) if they've already had their initial vaccines. .

Official figures show 70.7% of the population have received a full course of vaccine, while 35% have had boosters.



Opponents of the Corona policy march through downtown Munich in a demonstration procession in Munich, Germany, Wednesday, Dec. 22, 2021. Nearly 3000 opponents of the Corona measures demonstrated in Munich on Wednesday. Germany's health minister said Thursday that he expects a surge in coronavirus cases around the New Year period, and people will likely need a fourth shot of vaccine to maintain the best immune response against COVID-19. Credit: Lennart Preiss/dpa via AP



German Health Minister Karl Lauterbach gestures during a press conference on the current coronavirus pandemic in Berlin, Germany, Wednesday, Dec. 22, 2021. Germany's health minister said Thursday that he expects a surge in coronavirus cases around the New Year period, and people will likely need a fourth shot of vaccine to maintain the best immune response against COVID-19. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn

Demonstrations against new pandemic restrictions and a planned universal vaccine mandate have flared up in Germany over the past weeks.

Police said about 5,000 protesters gathered in the center of Munich late Wednesday, with some participants attacking officers. Eleven people were detained.

Prosecutors in Bavaria state said Thursday that authorities are investigating two doctors on suspicion they provided false vaccination certificates to people who were unwilling to get shots against COVID-19, and administered diluted vaccines to other patients without their knowledge.

Officials have written to advise almost 1,000 people in the Passau region to get tested for antibodies to determine whether or not they were properly vaccinated.

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