

Poland's COVID deaths highest since April, new restrictions

December 15 2021



A resident of Warsaw receives a booster shot against COVID-19, in Warsaw, Poland, Tuesday Dec. 7, 2021. Poland and several other countries across central and eastern Europe are battling a massive surge of infection and death fueled by the transmissible delta variant. Now they face the specter of the another variant, omicron, with vaccinations rates far lower in the Western Europe. Credit: AP Photo/Czarek Sokolowski

Poland on Wednesday registered the highest number of COVID-19-related deaths since April amid a continuing high daily rate of new coronavirus infections.

There were 669 virus-related deaths reported, including 496 people with preexisting health issues, and 24,266 new infections in the nation of about 38 million. The death rate was the highest since April 22, when 694 deaths were reported.

Also Wednesday, restrictions took effect that closed discos and nightclubs, except for limited activity for up to 100 people for New Year's celebrations.

The new rules cut the limit of unvaccinated people in restaurants, eateries, hotels, theaters, cinemas, churches and sports facilities to 30% of capacity from 50%. Food is banned at cinemas. The limits can be extended only for people who can prove to facility supervisors that they are fully vaccinated. But critics say there are no clear regulations for conducting checks.

Public transportation is being limited to 75% of capacity. Schools are switching to remote learning from Dec. 20 through Jan. 9, but most of that time is the Christmas holiday period.

Travelers arriving from outside the visa-free Schengen zone need to show results of a COVID-19 test no older than 24 hours. Poland hasn't reported any omicron cases.

Teachers, medics and security forces, including police and the military, are required to be fully vaccinated by March 1.

Children age 5 and above can be vaccinated now, and temporary hospitals for COVID-19 patients are being opened in some cities like

Gdansk, on the Baltic Sea coast.

More than 20.7 million Poles have been fully vaccinated with Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca or Johnson & Johnson shots. Almost 5 million have received booster shots.

Since March 4, 2020, when Poland's first COVID-19 case was confirmed, almost 3.9 million infection cases have been registered, including almost 90,000 deaths.

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