

Sweden introduces anti-COVID measures as a 'precaution'

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Sweden said on Tuesday it would introduce a series of anti-COVID measures as a "precaution", with the Scandinavian country currently being spared the high infection rates seen in much of Europe.

A vaccination pass introduced on December 1 for indoor events of more than 100 people will be extended to restaurants and gyms in the near future, Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson told reporters.

No date has been set yet, but it will likely be in effect in the next few weeks. The pass provides proof that holders are fully vaccinated.

Working from home when possible was also recommended as of Wednesday, as was social distancing and the use of facemasks in [public transport](#) when crowding is inevitable.

Sweden has stood out during the pandemic with its softer approach, refusing to introduce any type of lockdown and only recommending limited use of facemasks.

It did however limit the number of people allowed to attend public gatherings, as well as opening hours at bars and restaurants. It also banned visits to elderly homes.

Sweden's [death toll](#)—just over 15,000 of the 10.3 million population—is around the European average.

But it is significantly higher than those of its neighbours Norway, Finland and Denmark, sparking heated debate about the Swedish strategy.

Even with the emergence of the Omicron variant, Sweden has no plans to change its approach, "which has worked in the past", chief epidemiologist Anders Tegnell told AFP last week.

While infections are now on the rise, the number of COVID cases and deaths in Sweden are currently among the lowest in Europe, with 26 deaths and fewer than 15,000 cases during the past week, according to

an AFP tally.

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