

Germany expects COVID-19 cases to peak in mid-February

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People rush to a train at a subway station in Frankfurt, Germany, Thursday, Jan. 20, 2022 as the daily number of COVID-19 infections are rising again. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst

Germany's health minister expects the number of coronavirus infections in the country to keep rising for several weeks before peaking next month.

Karl Lauterbach told German public broadcaster ZDF late Wednesday that "the wave will reach its peak roughly in mid-February."

Lauterbach warned that while hospitalization rates are currently low, clinics could see a severe strain in the coming weeks, noting that the share of people over age 50 who aren't vaccinated is significantly higher in Germany than in other European countries, such as Italy and Britain.

Germany's disease control agency reported 133,536 newly confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, and 234 deaths.

Omicron is less likely to cause [severe illness](#) than the previous delta variant, according to studies. Omicron spreads even more easily than other coronavirus strains, and has already become dominant in many countries. It also more easily infects those who have been vaccinated or had previously been infected by prior versions of the virus.

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