

Israel says 500K have received 4th vaccine dose

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Esther Pamensky, a volunteer with the women's unit of United Hatzalah emergency service, administers a fourth dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to a woman at Clalit Health Services in Mevaseret Zion, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo

Israel has administered a 4th vaccine dose to more than 500,000 people,

the Health Ministry said Friday.

Israel began administering second boosters to the most vulnerable late last month and later began offering them to everyone over 60.

Authorities hope the additional boosters will blunt a wave of infections driven by the omicron variant. Health Ministry figures show Israel currently has some 250,000 active cases. But only 317 patients are listed as seriously ill, far fewer than during previous waves.

"Israel's trailblazing vaccine campaign has reached another milestone," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said in a statement. "Thank you to the half a million Israelis who got the fourth dose of the COVID vaccine and in so doing, help to keep us all safer."

Israel was among the first countries to roll out vaccines a year ago and began widely offering third doses last summer in a bid to contain the delta variant. Nearly half the population has received at least one booster shot.

The country of nearly 9.5 million has reported 8,298 deaths from COVID-19 since the pandemic began.

Separately, the government announced that Eyal Hulata, the national security adviser, had tested positive for the virus. It said the prime minister and his staff took antigen tests that came back negative.



Siblings wait to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at Clalit Health Services in Mevaseret Zion, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo



Esther Pamensky, a volunteer with the women's unit of United Hatzalah emergency service, administers a fourth dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to a woman at Clalit Health Services in Mevaseret Zion, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo



N'amah Yetzhak Abohaikal, a volunteer with the women's unit of United Hatzalah emergency service, poses with a vial of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at Clalit Health Services in Mevaseret Zion, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo



N'amah Yetzhak Abohaikal, a volunteer with the women's unit of United Hatzalah emergency service, prepares administer the COVID-19 vaccine to a teen girl as her brother and grandmother watch, at Clalit Health Services in Mevaseret Zion, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo



Esther Pamensky, a volunteer with the women's unit of United Hatzalah emergency service, prepares a fourth dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for a woman at Clalit Health Services in Mevaseret Zion, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022. Credit: AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo

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