

# Omicron-hit Moscow reports record daily COVID cases

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Moscow reported Thursday a record number of new coronavirus infections over 24 hours, according to a government tally, as Russia braces for a fresh wave of cases driven by the Omicron variant.

Russia—one of the worst-hit countries in the world by the

virus—recorded 38,850 new cases Thursday, a figure edging towards its previous record set in November last year.

Moscow, which is the epicentre of Russia's outbreak, reported 11,557 new infections, surpassing a previous record set last June at the height of the wave driven by the Delta variant.

The number of cases across Russia has risen sharply in recent days, with authorities predicting an imminent surge in infections due to the fast-spreading Omicron variant.

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned last Wednesday that the country had two weeks to prepare for a surge in cases, calling for more testing and vaccinations.

The World Health Organization had warned earlier in the month that half of Europe could soon be infected with Omicron.

The developers of Russia's flagship vaccine, Sputnik V, said in a statement Thursday that its jab demonstrated "strong protection" against Omicron, pointing to a study carried out by the Spallanzani Institute in Italy.

Russia's government figures have reported 324,060 deaths from COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic—the highest [death](#) toll in Europe.

Those figures are contradicted by statistics agency Rosstat, which counts COVID deaths under a broader definition and says the overall death toll is close to double the official figure.

With four vaccines widely-available for months, Russians remain reluctant to get jabbed with just under half of the population fully

vaccinated.

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