

Russia sets another daily virus record amid omicron surge

January 23 2022, by Jim Heintz



Medical workers walk to an ambulance at a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Sunday, Jan. 23, 2022. Daily new coronavirus infections in Russia have reached an all-time high and authorities are blaming the highly contagious omicron variant, which they expect to soon dominate the country's outbreak. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko

New coronavirus infections in Russia reached an all-time high on Sunday, the third consecutive daily record as the highly contagious omicron variant spreads through the country.

The national coronavirus task force reported 63,205 new infections tallied in 24 hours—a spike of more than 25% since the record set on Friday. The task force reported 679 deaths, similar to other daily [death](#) counts in the past week.

The omicron variant has been detected in 64 of the country's 89 regions and Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova says that authorities expect it to become the dominant variant.

Just about half of Russia's 146 million people have been fully vaccinated despite the fact that Russia was among the first in the world to approve and roll out a COVID-19 vaccine. In Russia, everyone who received their primary vaccination more than six months ago has been eligible for a [booster shot](#) since July.

Gogov.ru, an independent website that tracks vaccinations, estimates that 8.8 million people have also received a booster shot.

Still, daily new infections in Russia have been steadily climbing since Jan. 10.

Russia's state coronavirus [task force](#) has registered 326,112 deaths since the start of the pandemic—by far Europe's worst death toll. Russia's state statistics agency, which uses broader counting criteria, puts the pandemic death toll even higher, saying the number of virus-linked deaths between April 2020 and October 2021 was over 625,000.



Medical workers carry a patient suspected of having coronavirus on a stretcher at a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Sunday, Jan. 23, 2022. Daily new coronavirus infections in Russia have reached an all-time high and authorities are blaming the highly contagious omicron variant, which they expect to soon dominate the country's outbreak. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



A patient suspected of having coronavirus walks follows a medical worker to a hospital in Kommunarka, outside Moscow, Russia, Sunday, Jan. 23, 2022. Daily new coronavirus infections in Russia have reached an all-time high and authorities are blaming the highly contagious omicron variant, which they expect to soon dominate the country's outbreak. Credit: AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko



People wearing face masks to help protect against the spread of the coronavirus ride a subway car in an underground in St. Petersburg, Russia, Friday, Jan. 21, 2022. Daily new coronavirus infections in Russia have reached an all-time high and authorities are blaming the highly contagious omicron variant, which they expect to soon dominate the country's outbreak. Record numbers of new cases were reported in Moscow and in St. Petersburg, where health officials on Friday limited elective outpatient care. Credit: AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky



People wearing face masks to help protect against the spread of the coronavirus ride a subway car in an underground in St. Petersburg, Russia, Friday, Jan. 21, 2022. Daily new coronavirus infections in Russia have reached an all-time high and authorities are blaming the highly contagious omicron variant, which they expect to soon dominate the country's outbreak. Record numbers of new cases were reported in Moscow and in St. Petersburg, where health officials on Friday limited elective outpatient care. Credit: AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky

Russia's authorities admit that current surge could end up as the country's biggest yet but so far haven't announced any major restrictions to stem it.

A nationwide lockdown wasn't being discussed, officials said, the government decided to indefinitely postpone introducing restrictions for

unvaccinated people, which would have been an extremely unpopular move among vaccine-hesitant Russians.

Russia has also cut the required isolation period for [people](#) infected with COVID-19 from 14 to seven days, although it remains unclear when that takes effect.

Authorities say the country's soaring infections so far haven't led to a similar spike in hospitalizations.

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