

Slovakia imposes COVID restrictions to get ready for omicron

January 19 2022



A teacher gives on-line lessons via webcam at the temporarily closed elementary school in the town of Trebisov, eastern Slovakia, Nov. 8, 2021. On Wednesday Jan. 19, 2022 Slovakia tightened access to what the government considers most risky events and public gatherings as the country is getting ready for the highly infectious omicron coronavirus variant. To attend weddings, parties, discotheques and others as well wellness and aqua centers, people need to receive a booster shot, or be vaccinated by two shots and additionally get tested or recovered from COVID-19. Credit: Roman Hanc/TASR via AP, File

Slovakia on Wednesday limited access to what the government considers the most risky events and public gatherings as the country gets ready for the highly infectious omicron coronavirus variant.

To attend weddings, parties, discotheques and other venues like wellness and swimming centers, people need to receive a booster shot, or be vaccinated with two shots and additionally get tested for or be recovered from COVID-19.

The number of people at those events and venues will be limited. All bars, restaurants and various services will also have to be closed between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

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.

Slovak authorities have been expecting the omicron variant to become dominant in January after delta caused a record surge in infections late last year.

In the nation of 5.5 million, more than 2.6 million people are considered fully vaccinated while almost 1.3 million have received a booster shot.

Meanwhile, the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients was declining despite a steep growth of new infections, the Health Ministry said Wednesday.

But the number of people needing hospitalization dropped to 1,643 on

Tuesday, about 2,000 less than in early December. Slovakia has reported more than 890,000 COVID-19 cases and 17,459 deaths.

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