

German vaccine panel backs 2nd booster for high-risk groups

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A 85-year-old man receives a booster vaccination in the so called "vaccination express" tram in central Frankfurt, Thursday, Nov. 4, 2021. Germany's independent vaccination advisory panel said Thursday it is recommending a second vaccine booster shot for people aged 70 among others particularly at risk from COVID-19. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Probst,file

Germany's independent vaccination advisory panel said Thursday it is recommending a second vaccine booster shot for people aged 70 and above, among others particularly at risk from COVID-19.

In a [draft recommendation](#), the panel also advocated the extra shot for residents of nursing homes, people with immunodeficiency aged 5 and above, and staff at medical and nursing care facilities.

It said that the at-risk groups should get the second [booster](#) three months at the earliest after the first, and health sector staff should receive it after six months. It pointed to data showing that the protection provided by the first booster against the now-dominant omicron variant wanes after a few months, particularly for the highest-risk groups.

The panel, known by its German acronym STIKO, said it isn't recommending a further shot for people who caught COVID-19 after their first booster.

Official figures show that at least 53.6% of the German population has received a booster shot. In all, 74.2% have received a full first round of vaccination and 75.9% have received at least one shot.

Germany's vaccination campaign has slowed considerably since Christmas after rebounding in December amid strong demand for boosters.

The government [missed a target](#) of giving 80% of the population at least one shot by the end of January, and remains concerned about a large number of older people who haven't been vaccinated at all as a wave of omicron infections continues to rise.

In Thursday's draft, the vaccine panel also recommended the Novavax [vaccine](#) for people age 18 and above. Officials hope that Novavax, made

using more conventional technology than the mRNA vaccines that have dominated Germany's vaccination drive, might persuade some people who so far have been reluctant to get their shots.

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