

# Spain ends mask mandate outdoors as coronavirus surge ebbs

February 8 2022

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A face mask, used as a preventive measure against the coronavirus, lies on the ground on a beach near Barbate, in Cadiz province, south of Spain, Saturday, Feb. 5, 2022. Spain's government announced Tuesday it is scrapping a mandate to wear masks outdoors, as COVID-19 infection rates drop and hospitals report lower admissions. Credit: AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti

Spain is scrapping a mandate to wear masks outdoors, as COVID-19 infection rates drop and hospitals report lower admissions.

Mask-wearing will not be necessary outside beginning Thursday, government spokeswoman Isabel Rodríguez said Tuesday after a weekly Cabinet meeting.

The rule change includes children at school during their breaks outside between classes.

However, [masks](#) remain mandatory in indoor public spaces, including public transportation, and when people are unable to keep a [safe distance](#) of 1.5 meters (4 feet) between them.

The measure reverses a step taken last December amid an unprecedented surge of infections fueled by the highly contagious omicron variant.

Official health ministry data showed how the spread of the virus gathered speed in November and peaked on Jan. 21 at 3,418 new infections per 100,000 residents over two weeks, a pandemic record. Contagion has since slowed down, with the 14-day figure dropping to just under 2,000.



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A woman wearing a face mask to protect against the spread of coronavirus, leaves a subway station in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022. Spain's government announced Tuesday it is scrapping a mandate to wear masks outdoors, as COVID-19 infection rates drop and hospitals report lower admissions. Credit: AP Photo/Paul White



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Authorities credit a strong vaccination rate of nearly 81% of Spain's 47 million people for a lower hospital admission rate of COVID-19 patients than in previous [infection](#) surges.

Spain has officially recorded more than 94,000 deaths linked to COVID-19.

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