

Israel lifts indoor mask mandate as coronavirus cases drop

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People, some wearing protective face masks, line up for PCR and Rapid Antigen COVID-19 coronavirus tests in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Jan. 4, 2022. Israel has lifted an indoor mask mandate in place for nearly a year as the country's new cases of coronavirus continue to drop. The end of the masking requirement took effect Saturday night, April 23, 2022. Masks remain mandatory in hospitals, elderly care facilities and on international flights. Credit: AP Photo/Ariel Schalit, File

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The end of the masking requirement took effect Saturday night. Masks remain mandatory in hospitals, elderly care facilities and on [international flights](#).

Israel has seen new cases of COVID-19 drop since the peak of the latest wave of infections in January. Serious cases of coronavirus have plummeted from a high of over 1,200 during the omicron variant outbreak to around 200.

Since the start of the pandemic two years ago, Israel has recorded over 4 million cases of coronavirus and at least 10,658 deaths—over one-fifth of them since January, according to the Health Ministry.

Over 72% of the country's 9.4 million people have at least one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, and nearly half have received three shots.

Israel closed its borders in November after the emergence of the novel [omicron](#) variant of the virus, but in the months since has reopened the country to foreign visitors and lifted almost all coronavirus restrictions.

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