

Turkey lifts wearing of masks inside as COVID-19 cases fall

April 26 2022



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Turkey on Tuesday lifted one of its last remaining COVID-19 restrictions, the wearing of masks in crowded indoor locations.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the relaxation in a televised meeting of the scientific board that has guided Turkey through two years of the pandemic. He said the board would not reconvene unless "extraordinary" circumstances arose.

"The obligation to use masks in closed spaces ... has been completely removed," Erdogan said from Ankara. "Mask application will be continued for a while only on public transport vehicles and in health institutions until the number of (daily) cases falls below 1,000."

Over-65s and those with other [health problems](#) would be advised to continue wearing masks, he added.

The number of daily cases has dropped dramatically since early February, when more than 110,000 infections were recorded. Monday's daily data from the Health Ministry showed 2,604 cases and 15 deaths.

At the start of March the government lifted rules on wearing masks outside or in indoor areas with sufficient air circulation and social distancing. It also ended the need for people to show a cell phone app logging their [personal health record](#) when entering venues such as [shopping malls](#).

Some 53 million of Turkey's population of 84.6 million have received at least two doses of vaccine, with nearly 28 million having had a third dose.

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Citation: Turkey lifts wearing of masks inside as COVID-19 cases fall (2022, April 26) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-04-turkey-masks-covid-cases-fall.html>

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