

Norway postpones reopening over Delta variant

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Norway on Monday said it was postponing the lifting of anti-coronavirus measures, fearing a potential fourth wave of cases brought on by the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus.

The near total lifting of all virus restrictions would be pushed back "until the end of July, beginning of August" at the earliest, the government said.

"The development remains positive," Prime Minister Erna Solberg told a press conference, adding the government would wait and see how the Delta variant affects the situation.

Reopening too quickly would raise the risk "that the Delta variant could create a fourth wave in the part of the population that is not vaccinated, in groups who have received only one dose and in [vulnerable groups](#) with weakened immune systems," she said.

Norway, where the COVID-19 epidemic has largely been brought under control, started the third of its four-phase plan to ease restrictions on June 18 and was due to review the next phase three weeks later.

The government chose to give itself time as the country and Europe face the spread of the more contagious Delta variant, which Solberg said could become dominant in the nation within a few weeks.

"It is important to curb this development," she said.

Over 65 percent of the [adult population](#) in Norway has received at least a first dose of a COVID vaccine.

The Scandinavian country of 5.4 million people is only using mRNA vaccines—Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna—in its inoculation programme.

It dropped the AstraZeneca vaccine and reserves the Johnson & Johnson shot for volunteers only in specific cases, due to their rare but [serious side effects](#).

According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Norway has seen an incidence rate of 47.32 new cases per 100,000 population over the past 15 days, with very low mortality.

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