

Infections soar as Czech authorities urge vaccination

October 26 2021, by Karel Janicek



People wait in line to get vaccinated against COVID-19 in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, Oct. 25, 2021. The Czech Republic has been hit by a steep rise in coronavirus infections that have reached levels unseen since late April. Credit: AP Photo/Petr David Jousek

Coronavirus infections in the Czech Republic have soared to the highest

levels in more than half a year as authorities call on people to get vaccinated.

The Health Ministry said the daily tally of new cases jumped to 4,262 on Monday, 1,733 more than a week ago. It was the highest daily increase since April 13.

The trend was not expected to be reversed any time soon.

The ministry predicted that in the next few days the country will have more than 300 people infected per 100,000 in a seven-day period, a significant increase from 217 on Monday.

Health Minister Adam Vojtech blamed a low vaccination rate.

"It has become an epidemic of the non-vaccinated, it's a fact," Vojtech said on Tuesday. "A majority of new cases are not vaccinated, and a majority of those who have to be hospitalized and are in serious condition have not been vaccinated."

According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, some 67% of Czechs over 18 have been fully vaccinated, which is below an average of over 74.5% among the European Union nations.

"I dare say that if we manage to increase the number of the vaccinated we'd be able to cancel all restrictive measures the very next day," Vojtech said.



People wait in line to get vaccinated against COVID-19 in Prague, Czech Republic, Monday, Oct. 25, 2021. The Czech Republic has been hit by a steep rise in coronavirus infections that have reached levels unseen since late April. Credit: AP Photo/Petr David Josek

That's not in sight yet. In fact, more restrictions have been reimposed, with face coverings mandatory at workplaces, starting this week. And as of next week, restaurants, bars, nightclubs and other places will need to check whether the patrons have the required COVID-19 certificate confirming they have been vaccinated, tested negative or recovered from the virus.

The government also decided to limit the time for which negative tests are valid. National health insurance also will not cover the costs of

coronavirus tests now for non-medical purposes such as traveling or visiting restaurants, in an effort to prod more people to get vaccinated.

In recent days, people seem to have been listening to [health](#) authorities as an average of 30,000 a day received a shot, about three times more than several weeks ago.

In a worrying trend, though, the number of hospitalized surpassed 1,000 on Monday for the first [time](#) since May, while 17 people died of COVID-19 on Sunday, the biggest number since May 20.

The Czech Republic has been one of the hardest hit of the European Union's 27 countries in the pandemic. The nation of 10.7 million has seen 1.7 million confirmed infections and 30,648 deaths.

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