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Moscow Restricts Restaurants to Vaccinated and Immune Diners

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"It's time for Moscow to adapt their experience if we want to avoid a new and highly undesirable lockdown," the mayor said. **Moskva News Agency**

The city of Moscow will require all restaurant patrons to be either vaccinated against or immune to the coronavirus, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin announced Tuesday as the Russian capital continued to grapple with the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

Starting Monday, June 28, restaurants will only accept diners who present an official QR code proving their vaccination, recovery from Covid-19 over the past six months or negative PCR test results conducted within 72 hours. Paper vaccination certificates and test results won't be accepted.

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"Similar rules for visiting restaurants and cafes have been in effect for several months in many European and Asian cities," Sobyanin wrote on his personal website.

“It’s time for Moscow to adapt their experience if we want to avoid a new and highly undesirable lockdown,” said the mayor of the metropolis of 12 million people.

The latest unprecedented measures, which also include immediate bans on indoor and outdoor concerts and sports competitions involving more than 500 people, come days after the city confirmed an all-time record number of new Covid-19 infections on Friday.

That day, Sobyanin extended an 11 p.m. curfew for bars and restaurants, canceled mass events with over 1,000 participants and ordered the city's Euro 2020 fan zone to close, among other measures. Health authorities meanwhile announced that Moscow hospitals will no longer provide routine, non-emergency treatment to unvaccinated patients.

The city is also testing so-called “Covid-free” restaurants that allow vaccinated customers not to wear masks and gloves or maintain social distancing. Customers would have to present a QR code confirming their double-dose vaccination status which can be downloaded from the government portal.

So far around 170 establishments have signed up to become Covid-free zones while food takeout and delivery remains widely available.

The Kremlin, which has delegated pandemic-related measures to regional governors and mayors, said Tuesday that it supported Sobyanin’s newly announced restrictions.

“The decisions we’re making are difficult and unpopular, but necessary to save people’s lives,” Sobyanin, who last week ordered 60% of the city’s service sector workers to get vaccinated, wrote.

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