

# Russia Won't Hit 60% Vaccination Target By Autumn, Kremlin Says as Virus Surges

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Russia's goal of reaching herd immunity through vaccination has been delayed by a lagging public uptake. **Dmitry Feoktistov / TASS**

Russia will not meet its widely publicized goal of reaching herd immunity against coronavirus through vaccination by this fall, the Kremlin [said](#) Tuesday as the country struggles against the highly infectious Delta variant, record-breaking deaths and a lagging vaccine uptake.

President Vladimir Putin's office made the admission after the independent Dozhd broadcaster [reported](#) that the Kremlin has lowered its vaccination target to 30-35% from the initial 60% by Sept. 1. Health officials told Dozhd, which reported that unvaccinated people with antibodies would now be counted toward the 60%, they have not changed their vaccination targets.

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“It’s obvious that it won’t be possible to vaccinate 60%,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. “This level of vaccination will not be reached, so the deadlines will shift to the right.”

Russia was the world’s first country to approve a Covid-19 vaccine last August and has authorized three more shots in the months since.

Still, vaccination rates stalled in May despite free vaccinations and a range of perks offered by the authorities to meet the initial goal of reaching herd immunity, with polls showing Russia as one of the world's most vaccine-skeptic countries.

“We see that demand for vaccines began more or less growing only this week. Uptake was unfortunately low despite the fact that the state created opportunities” to get free shots, Peskov said.

Two weeks ago, Moscow led more than a dozen Russian regions by making vaccination compulsory for workers who interact with the public. The Kremlin has insisted that its promise that vaccination is voluntary remains intact despite the growing list of regions and industries that marry vaccination mandates with restrictions against unvaccinated people.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said Monday that demand for vaccinations has since picked up, leading to 23 million Russians receiving at least one vaccine dose, while independent tallies [place](#) the number at 22.1 million, or 15.18% of the population. Several regions reported vaccine shortages in recent days as a result.

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