

Putin Self-Isolates Over Inner Circle Coronavirus Cases

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Since the start of the pandemic all of Putin's face-to-face visitors have been required to observe a two-week quarantine before meeting him. **Mikhail Metzger / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin said he is going into self-isolation after “several” people in his inner circle contracted the coronavirus, and that he hopes Russia's Sputnik V vaccine will protect him.

In a videoconference meeting with officials on Tuesday, Putin said he had been in close contact with one infected individual “all of yesterday.” The person had fallen ill days after being revaccinated against the virus, he said.

“We'll see how Sputnik V works in practice,” he added, noting that his antibody levels were still high after receiving the vaccine this spring. “I hope that everything will be as it should, and Sputnik V will show its high levels of protection against Covid in real life.”

Earlier Tuesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Putin had tested negative for Covid-19 and was “absolutely healthy.” Peskov added, however, that Putin would

have to go into quarantine because he had been in contact with one of “several” people who had been infected.

Putin, 68, eschews face masks in public appearances, and since the start of the pandemic all of his face-to-face visitors have been required to observe a [two-week quarantine](#) before meeting him. He has held cabinet sessions and other government meetings via videoconference for more than a year.

The previous day, a hot-mic moment [captured](#) Putin discussing the possibility of going into quarantine due to Covid-19 cases among people with he had been in contact with. The Kremlin initially on Monday dismissed Putin’s words as “a figure of speech.”

The Kremlin said Tuesday that Putin will not attend two Russia- and China-led security and economic summits in person this week, opting instead to appear via videoconference. Observers noted that Putin’s conspicuous absence comes after Chinese President Xi Jinping dropped out of the summit in ex-Soviet Tajikistan earlier Monday.

The Russian president is [known](#) for his aversion to germs and intense cautiousness regarding his health. The Kremlin has said that special “[disinfection tunnels](#)” have been installed in the complex and at Putin’s residence outside Moscow to protect him from Covid-19.

Russia has struggled to keep the pandemic under control since the surge of the more-contagious Delta variant that swept the country during the summer, with slower-than-hoped vaccination rates allowing cases to spread and deaths to hit pandemic highs.

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