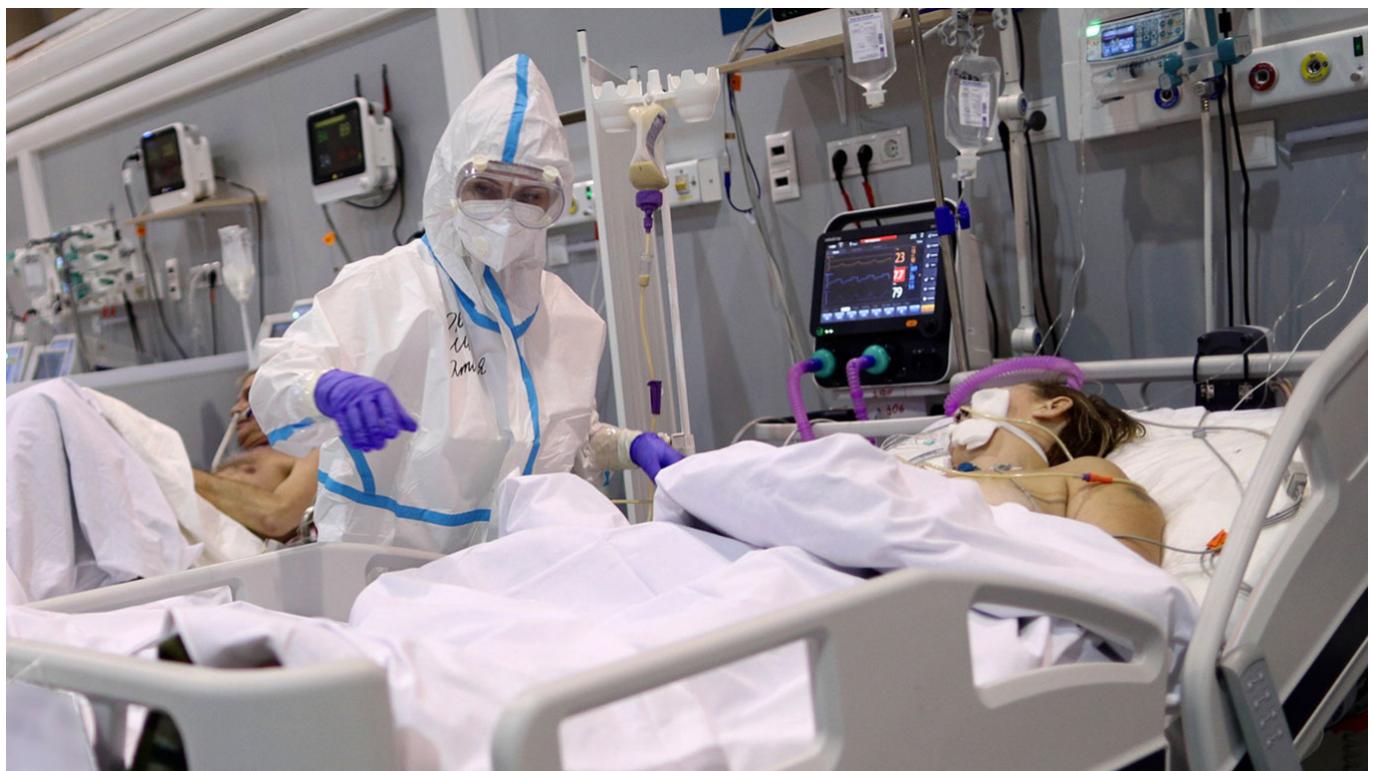


Russia Marks 6th Consecutive Day of Record Covid Cases

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Kirill Zykow / Moskva News Agency

Russia set a sixth consecutive daily record for coronavirus infections Wednesday as officials warned that the surge fueled by the more-contagious Omicron variant could continue for another two weeks.

The government's Covid-19 task force reported 74,692 new infections over the last 24 hours.

The increase brings Russia's total caseload to 11.3 million, the sixth-highest in the world.

Russia's task force also recorded 657 new deaths in the country with the highest number of coronavirus fatalities in Europe.

The latest available data based on official statistics shows 929,000 excess deaths in Russia between the start of the pandemic in the spring of 2020 and November 2021.

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New Covid-19 infections in Russia more than doubled in one week, though the Kremlin said it saw no need to impose fresh restrictions due to Omicron's milder severity. Regional authorities introduced limited restrictions, including Moscow suspending children's hospitalizations for three weeks due to a 14-fold spike in coronavirus infections and a 10-fold rise in hospitalizations among minors.

Health officials have [detected](#) the Omicron variant in 72 out of 85 Russian regions as of Wednesday.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said Tuesday that Omicron is now a dominant strain among those infected.

Sobyanin warned that the capital, the epicenter of Russia's coronavirus outbreak, was likely to see growing coronavirus cases for at least two more weeks.

Independent researchers forecast up to 2 million daily Covid-19 infections by the peak of the latest wave in early February, but suggested that the task force figures would only reflect 250,000 daily cases.

Vaccine skepticism is widespread among Russians, with vaccinations so far in January dropping to nearly an all-time low since the nationwide campaign was launched in December 2020.

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