

# Israeli PM warns of new virus outbreak as cases rise

June 22 2021

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Prime Minister Naftali Bennett warned Tuesday of a "new outbreak" of coronavirus in Israel after a rise in infections he said was likely due to returning travellers carrying the Delta variant.

"Our goal is to end it, to take a bucket of water and pour it on the fire when the fire is still small," Bennett said at Ben Gurion airport, where

the government announced an expanded testing facility would be set up.

Israel recorded 125 new cases on Monday—the most per day since April, in a country where more than half the population has been fully vaccinated.

At the peak of the country's outbreak in January, Israel was recording some 10,000 daily cases.

Bennett said a recent spike in infections appeared to be due to the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus that likely came from overseas.

An outbreak in the town of Binyamina, north of Tel Aviv, saw more than 1,000 people quarantined and appeared to be due to travellers returning from Cyprus, he said.

"Whoever doesn't have to fly abroad, please don't," Bennett added.

Israel remains largely closed to non-citizens.

Bennett, who ousted former premier Benjamin Netanyahu earlier this month, said he was reconvening a "corona cabinet" to handle the challenge.

"We reached an [initial decision](#) to treat this as a new outbreak," Bennett said.

Israel launched a sweeping vaccination campaign after obtaining millions of doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

More than 55 percent of Israel's population—some 5.2 million people—have received both doses of the vaccine.

Bennett urged parents to get their children vaccinated too, calling for children aged 12 and older to get jabs "as quickly as possible".

Health ministry figures show that [young people](#) aged 10-19 were the most affected by the virus last month.

On June 15, Israel lifted its requirement to wear [face masks](#) in enclosed [public places](#)—one of the last measures in force to fight the country's outbreak.

The country has recorded over 840,000 novel coronavirus cases, including 6,428 deaths.

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Citation: Israeli PM warns of new virus outbreak as cases rise (2021, June 22) retrieved 3 February 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-06-israeli-pm-virus-outbreak-cases.html>

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