



## Israel faces new COVID outbreaks attributed to Delta variant

JERUSALEM (Reuters) – Israel on Monday recommended that all 12-15 year-olds be vaccinated against COVID-19, citing new outbreaks attributed to the more infectious Delta variant.

Israel expanded vaccine eligibility to include adolescents last month, but until now had left the matter up to the parents' preference.

With about three-quarters of Israelis in eligible age groups having received the vaccine, infections have fallen off sharply from a peak of more than 10,000 daily cases in January to days with single digits this month.

The country has since dropped nearly all its social distancing restrictions, although its borders remain largely closed to tourists.

But COVID-19 recurrences were

logged at two schools last week and the daily positivity rate is creeping back up to 100, Health Ministry data showed.

In response, the ministry issued the formal recommendation for 12 to 15 year-olds to get vaccinated, noting that travel abroad is expected to rise during the summer.

Nachman Ash, the national pandemic response coordinator, said earlier that the move "would certainly be correct at this stage."

"We should not wait for higher numbers. We have seen there were quite a few children infected over the last week," Ash said.

Separately, Israel's health minister said the government would begin imposing fines on Israelis who traveled to countries deemed unsafe due to high infection levels.



**A teenager receives a coronavirus vaccine as Israel urged more 12-to-15-year-olds to be inoculated, citing new outbreaks attributed to the more infectious Delta variant, in Tel Aviv on Monday.**

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