



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on June 23, 2021

Israel Requires Vaccinated Travelers to Quarantine if Exposed to “Delta” Variant; Still Pushes Jabs on Adolescents

Israel empowered health officials on Wednesday to quarantine anyone deemed to have been exposed to the “Delta” variant of COVID-19, even if they were previously vaccinated or recovered from the disease with presumed immunity, *Reuters* [reports](#). Still, officials urge parents to get their children of eligible age to get a shot.

The decision followed a [warning](#) by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on Tuesday over new outbreaks caused by the Delta variant, with daily infections rising after weeks of low plateau credited to Israel’s record mass-vaccination drive.



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“In the light of the data, we are treating the situation as a renewed outbreak,” Bennett said. “There are indications that the so-called Delta coronavirus variant has begun spreading in Israel,” the Israeli leader added, noting he will reconvene the coronavirus cabinet to discuss a plan to curb the renewed spread of the virus.

The country’s latest outbreaks were identified in several schools during random testing and came after Israel rolled back nearly all of its coronavirus restrictions.

Israel recorded 125 new cases on Monday — the most per day since April — and 110 new coronavirus cases were identified on Tuesday, including 64 children and teens registered within the country’s education system. The Education Ministry update on Tuesday [said](#) that 183 students and 20 staff members are confirmed to be infected. Overall, there are over 5,000 students self-isolating, close to 2,000 of whom entered quarantine in the past day, the ministry said.

Israeli Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz [said](#), “The Delta variant, sometimes called the Indian variant, is currently spreading rapidly around the world with a much higher infection rate than we were familiar with,” he said. “Unfortunately, we are seeing the beginning of a virus spread within the State of Israel, and we do not always know how to locate its source.”

Several coronavirus outbreaks in schools throughout the country were mostly caused by breaches of quarantine by people returning from abroad, Horowitz believes.

On Tuesday night, Health Ministry Director-General Hezi Levi signed the order that mandates vaccinated or recovered individuals to quarantine where there is concern about possible exposure to the “highly infectious Delta variant.”

Under the updated [directives](#), vaccinated or formerly infected people can be ordered to self-isolate for up to 14 days if “authorities believe” they may have been in “close contact with a carrier of a dangerous



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virus variant.” According to the ministry, “close contact” could include being passengers on the same plane.

The second condition for quarantine includes coming into contact with someone infected with a less-contagious coronavirus variant but who is regularly in an institution where the population is vulnerable or not vaccinated or has taken a “less effective vaccine” (not Pfizer/BioNTech).

The third scenario requiring quarantine involves a vaccinated traveler who is on the same return flight to Israel as a passenger who tests positive for COVID-19.

Those who violate quarantine will be [fined](#) up to NIS 5,000 (\$1,530). Those who travel to high-risk countries, including India, Russia, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, and Argentina, will face a similar fine.

So do the current vaccines protect against a “Delta” variant or not?

Currently, Israel’s level of vaccination against COVID-19 is the second-highest in the world. [According](#) to Ourworldindata.org, 59.5 percent of Israel’s population have received both doses of the vaccine, and 63.5 percent received one. Eligibility for the shots has been [expanded](#) to 12- to 15-year-olds, but the turnout in that group has been low.

Arguing that vaccination is the best way to protect young people who seem to be more vulnerable to the new strain, Prime Minister Bennett urged parents to vaccinate their children “as quickly as possible” despite the evidently mixed messages his government sends.

“As a father of children in the right age group, I say that I’m going to have my children vaccinated,” Bennett [said](#), calling on all parents to do the same. Bennett also worries that most of the vaccines we have will expire by the end of July. “We have enough for everyone, but to complete both doses, they have to get the first shot by July 9.”

Government officials complain there will be no herd immunity if the younger generation is not vaccinated.

Over a third of the population, mostly children and adolescents, are unvaccinated, [said](#) Ran Balicer, who heads a COVID-19 government advisory committee. “At this level, it is unlikely that one can reach full herd immunity.”

As officials rush parents to get their children inoculated, and in light of the newly introduced restrictions for travelers, there are some serious concerns surrounding the vaccination.

First, [nearly a third](#) of the new cases recorded in the past week have been found in vaccinated people, with many of the new infections being the “Delta” variant, suggesting the vaccine’s efficacy against both strains is at least questionable.

Second, the Pfizer vaccine, used in Israel exclusively, has been linked to an increased chance of developing thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP), a rare blood disorder, Israeli researchers [found](#). TTP is an autoimmune disease that causes blood clots to form in various organs of the body. According to the National Institutes of Health, these clots can limit or block the flow of oxygen-rich blood to key organs like the brain, kidneys and heart, resulting in serious health problems.

Finally, in early June, a report on a link between the vaccine and heart inflammation in young people was [submitted](#) to the Israel’s Health Ministry.

Do Israeli officials actually believe in the effectiveness of the vaccine against the “Delta” strain? And if the vaccine works, then why quarantine people? If it doesn’t work as advertised, then why push it so



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hard, given the health risk the job apparently poses to young people?



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