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Vaccine dose wave

... off to slow start; coronavirus



Jerusalem, November 24, 2021. (Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90)

Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz said Wednesday that Israelis may need to get a fourth COVID-19 vaccine dose at some point if cases climb again, as the country's top coronavirus official warned that the country may already be seeing the start of a fifth infection wave.

"It's not unreasonable [to think] we'll need a fourth vaccine," said Horowitz in an interview with Channel 12, after Health Ministry data indicated that 9 percent of the new cases diagnosed Tuesday had received the third booster dose.

Most concerns, however, have revolved not around triply-vaccinated adults, but children who have yet to be vaccinated. Israel began giving shots to kids as young as 5 this week, amid signs pointing to increasing infection rates among kids.

Some commentators have referred to the current rise in infections as the "children's wave."

Coronavirus czar Salman Zarka, who is spearheading the national response to the pandemic, said he believes Israel is already in a new wave of infections.

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the shots.

public broadcaster Wednesday.

like this one. We thought about a said. "The increase now is too early

l people. It wasn't clear if the 9% of two weeks needed for the dose to

e rising number of cases.

ole and live alongside COVID," he

, with just four percent of parents

istry, said Wednesday that around 1 million children are eligible for

"There's no reason to wait with the children's vaccination. The virus doesn't wait. It can be dangerous to children," Horowitz said, citing the virus's acute symptoms and potential long-term effects, including concentration problems, anxiety and breathing difficulties.



Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz speaks during a press conference on November 9, 2021. (Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90)

Surveys have found widespread hesitancy toward vaccinating children in Israel, but

Horowitz said that thousands of children who will receive the

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and a booster shot, out of a

"vaccination is the main tool" for

that "are not anti-vaxxers... maybe

there be a need for new virus if daily or infection rates are seen

of herd sizes as a first stage, including if cases are seen," Gans told the

1.08, based on data from 10 days

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carrier.

A child gets the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in Jerusalem on November 23, 2021 (Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90)

Also known as the "R-number," the figure represents the number of people each confirmed patient infects, on average. Any number over 1 signifies that case numbers are rising. The infection rate had been below 1 for two months before hitting that threshold several days ago.

At a meeting of the coronavirus cabinet Tuesday, the first in some two months, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett reportedly warned of possible restrictions to stem COVID-19 infections during the upcoming Hanukkah holiday.

As of Wednesday evening, there were 6,606 active cases, including 122 people in serious condition. There have been 80.

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