

Germany's Merkel warns of third virus wave due to new strains



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German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in an interview published Wednesday that a third wave of coronavirus infections could hit the country due to new strains that are emerging.

In an interview with Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Merkel said that new variants of the coronavirus could hit the country and that caution is needed so the country doesn't need "a new complete shutdown," Reuters reported.

Health officials are worried about three new variants of the coronavirus that are thought to have originated in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil and seem to be more transmissible.

For the country to start reopening, Merkel wants Germany to average 35 cases per 100,000 people over a week time frame. The country has a seven-day incidence rate of 60 new cases per 100,000 people.

Coronavirus restriction around the country will be in place until March 7 but could extend depending on how the infection rates look in the country.

The restrictions are countrywide currently, but if local areas start to see improvement, they might be allowed to open up more than areas that are getting hit harder by the pandemic.

- New coronavirus variant spreading in New York City
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"In a district with a stable incidence of 35, for example, it may be possible to open all schools without causing distortions in relation to other districts with a higher incidence and schools that are not yet open," Merkel said.

Merkel also stressed during the interview the importance of vaccines and testing as a way to keep the country from having a third wave and being able to reopen.

Many countries are hoping that as vaccines become more available their country's economies will be able to reopen. However, health officials caution that just because a person gets the vaccine doesn't mean they are able to live as they did before the pandemic began.

Source:

<https://thehill.com/policy/international/540346-germanys-merkel-warns-of-third-virus-wave-due-to-new-strains>

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