

Beat: Health

The Spanish Government decrees the end of the health emergency by COVID-19

3 years after the start of the pandemic

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USPA NEWS - The Spanish Government declared this Tuesday, three years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the end of the health crisis and the extraordinary measures agreed to address this emergency situation. Therefore, it eliminated the mandatory use of the mask in spaces where it was still required. The measure will enter into force when the agreement is published in the Official State Gazette (BOE).

The Minister of Health, José Miñones, highlighted the health, economic and social measures adopted by the Government since the World Health Organization (WHO) warned on March 11, 2020, that the emergency caused by COVID was a global pandemic. He also praised the work of scientists and technicians, professionals - both health and non-health -, citizens and the media, and reminded the victims and their families.

Miñones pointed out that the start of vaccination marked "a before and after" in the pandemic. In Spain, 93% of the population has a full dose after administering more than 105 million vaccines. "Our message has to be clear: vaccines save lives," said the Minister of Health, who defended that Spain's vaccination strategy is an international benchmark. Spain is also among the top five donors of vaccines to other countries. As proof that this commitment is still valid, the minister announced that one of the first initiatives of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union will be a technical meeting on vaccination on July 18.

The epidemiological situation of COVID, Miñones explained, has been balanced since November 2022 and even shows signs of a decreasing trend both in the number of deaths and hospitalizations. The number of hospital beds occupied by these patients does not reach 1%, and their presence in the Intensive Care Units (ICU) has also been considerably reduced.

These data, together with the lower virulence of the current variant of the coronavirus and the higher percentages of immunity and vaccination, "allow us to conclude that the disease no longer constitutes a health crisis situation in Spain, something in line with what the Emergency Committee of the WHO determined on May 5 and with the position of experts from the Center for Coordination of Health Alerts and Emergencies (CAES). All the regions also agreed to end the crisis in the Interterritorial Council on June 23," said Miñones.

The Minister of Health stressed the importance of maintaining the "culture of responsibility" acquired over the years: "The use of masks, as well as other hygienic measures that were put in place, must continue to be present in our lives, from day to day, for all those people who have symptoms of respiratory infection." The recommendations of the experts, he detailed, focus on health centers and on the need to reinforce the use of the mask by symptomatic people when they are in shared spaces, by professionals who care for symptomatic cases and by people who they work in ICUs and in units with vulnerable patients.

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