

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

24th Sep 2021

One Minute Overview

School Reopenings Falter on Rising Delta Variant Cases - Over the past month, with kindergarten through 12th grade in session, the country has reported almost 1 million cases among those under 18. [Though kids typically are less likely than adults to become severely ill with Covid, they increasingly are contracting the highly contagious delta variant.](#) As of Sunday, 2,000 schools nationwide had closed — 18% more than a week earlier, according to the Burbio tracker.

The World Is at War With Covid. Covid Is Winning - So when vaccine developers were figuring out how to produce billions of Covid-19 vaccine shots as quickly as possible, they decided to use an alternative: disposable bioreactor bags. At first, it was a win-win. [The bags are quicker and cheaper to make than the tanks, and using them can shave precious hours off manufacturing times because they don't have to be cleaned and sterilized after each use.](#) But before long, even this innovation became an obstacle in the quest to end the Covid pandemic. First, larger vaccine makers bought up many more bags than they could use, leaving smaller vaccine makers with no recourse and potential manufacturing sites underutilized. Then as the vaccination campaign wore on, supplies began drying up altogether. Only a few companies make the bags, and they have little incentive to ramp up their manufacturing efforts because there's no telling how long the uptick in demand will last.

Japan to double COVID-19 vaccine donations to other countries to 60 mln doses - Japan plans to give other countries 60 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said on Thursday, doubling the target from the previous pledge of 30 million doses. ['Today, I am pleased to announce that, with additional contributions, Japan will provide up to approximately 60 million doses of vaccine in total.'](#) Suga said in a pre-recorded video message at the U.S.-hosted Global COVID-19 Summit.

U.K. Eases Covid Travel Rules for COP26 Climate Conference - The U.K. has relaxed Covid-related travel restrictions for people attending the international climate conference in Glasgow that's now less than six weeks away. [Minister-level officials from so-called red list countries, along with two staffers, won't be required to spend time in quarantine when they arrive for the COP26 conference, according to updated travel requirements.](#) That's a change from an earlier stance that required visitors from the high risk, red-list countries to spend five days in isolation.

New Zealand's Ardern says lockdowns can end with high vaccine uptake - New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Thursday the country [should aim for a 90%-plus rate of inoculation, and could drop strict coronavirus lockdown measures once enough people were vaccinated.](#)

Aged care staff sacked in regional Australia for refusing to get Covid-19 vaccination - Aged care facilities struggling after exodus of anti-vaxxers are forced out. [All staff must be fully vaccinated in order to work with the vulnerable group.](#) Outstretched regional homes are particularly under pressure from the new rules

Ukraine tightens coronavirus lockdown curbs - Ukraine tightened coronavirus lockdown curbs on Thursday, restricting large events and occupancy at gyms, cinemas and cultural sites, after a recent steady increase in new infections. Ukraine imposed a nationwide 'yellow' code after cases

dropped over the summer, allowing it to lift lockdown restrictions. [This week, however, the government extended a state of emergency that allows authorities to impose curbs until year-end to rein in infections.](#) The health ministry has said it plans compulsory coronavirus vaccinations for those in occupations such as teaching and employment in state institutions and local governments.

Valneva expands trials on COVID-19 vaccine candidate - French vaccine maker Valneva (VLS.PA) is expanding trials of a COVID-19 vaccine candidate called VLA2001, and remains in talks with the European Commission over a potential contract, the company said on Thursday. [Valneva shares plunged 42% after Britain said on Sept 13 that it cancelled its contract for about 100 million doses of the vaccine the company is developing,](#) partly over concerns about when it would win approval for use.

EU drugs regulator to decide on Pfizer vaccine booster in early October - The European Medicines Agency (EMA) aims to decide in early October whether to endorse a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech, COVID-19 vaccine to be given half a year after the initial two-shot course, saying breakthrough infections added some urgency to its review. ['The outcome of this evaluation is expected in early October, unless supplementary information is needed,' EMA's head of vaccines strategy, Marco Cavaleri, told a press briefing on Thursday.](#) Cavaleri's statement confirmed a Reuters report earlier in the day on EMA's expected review time on the matter

COVID-19: Global cases sees biggest fall in two months, says WHO - but UK in top five for new infections - The number of new COVID-19 cases across the world has seen its biggest fall in more than two months, [the World Health Organization \(WHO\) has said. New coronavirus infections fell to 3.6 million cases last week - down from the global figure of four million for the previous seven days.](#) The most COVID cases were seen in the UK, US, India, Turkey, and the Philippines.

Brazil approaches 600,000 COVID deaths in second-deadliest outbreak - Brazil has had 24,611 new cases of the novel coronavirus reported in the past 24 hours, and 648 deaths from COVID-19, the health ministry said on Thursday. [The South American country has now registered 21,308,178 cases since the pandemic began, while the official death toll has risen to 592,964, according to ministry data, in the world's third worst outbreak outside the United States and India and its second-deadliest after the United States.](#) As vaccination advances, the rolling 7-day average of COVID deaths has fallen to less than one fifth of the toll of almost 3,000 a day at the peak of the pandemic in April.

Alaska, overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients, adopts crisis standards for hospitals - Alaska, which led most U.S. states in coronavirus vaccinations months ago, [took the drastic step on Wednesday of imposing crisis-care standards for its entire hospital system, declaring that a crushing surge in COVID-19 patients has forced rationing of strained medical resources.](#)

Lockdown Exit

Covid variant that originated in Japan should be watched closely, expert says

Covid variant R.1 is a variant 'to watch', according to disease expert Dr Haseltine. He claimed it had established a foothold in both Japan and the US. But figures show it has been displaced in both countries by the Delta variant

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10016505/Covid-variant-increased-resistance-antibodies-identified-Kentucky-nursing-home.html>

Delta Air says employee vaccination rate against COVID-19 rises to 82%

Delta Air Lines said on Thursday its employee vaccination rate against COVID-19 had risen to 82%, weeks after announcing a monthly health insurance surcharge for unvaccinated workers. The U.S. airline last month said employees will have to pay \$200 more every month for their company-

sponsored healthcare plan if they choose to not be vaccinated against COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/delta-air-says-employee-vaccination-rate-against-covid-19-rises-82-2021-09-23/>

Uganda loosens anti-coronavirus restrictions as pandemic ebbs

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni on Wednesday eased anti-coronavirus restrictions, including allowing resumption of education for universities and other post-secondary institutions, citing a decline in infections in the country. The east African country started experiencing a second wave of the pandemic around May, shortly after authorities announced detection of the highly transmissible Delta variant.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/uganda-loosens-anti-coronavirus-restrictions-pandemic-ebbs-2021-09-22/>

Olympics-USOPC will require COVID-19 vaccine for all US athletes at Beijing Games

The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee on Wednesday said all U.S. athletes hoping to compete at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics will need to be vaccinated against COVID-19. "Effective Nov. 1, 2021, the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee will require all USOPC staff, athletes and those utilizing USOPC facilities - including the training centers - to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19," USOPC CEO Sarah Hirshland wrote in a letter reviewed by Reuters. "This requirement will also apply to our full Team USA delegation at future Olympic and Paralympic Games." Athletes and staff would have to opportunity to obtain a medical or religious exemption to the mandate, the USOPC said.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/sport/other/olympics-usopc-will-require-covid-19-vaccine-for-all-u-s-athletes-at-beijing-games/ar-AAOIPID>

School Reopenings Falter on Rising Delta Variant Cases

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<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-09-23/school-reopenings-falter-on-rising-delta-variant-cases>

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So when vaccine developers were figuring out how to produce billions of Covid-19 vaccine shots as quickly as possible, they decided to use an alternative: disposable bioreactor bags. At first, it was a win-win. The bags are quicker and cheaper to make than the tanks, and using them can shave precious hours off manufacturing times because they don't have to be cleaned and sterilized after each use. But before long, even this innovation became an obstacle in the quest to end the Covid pandemic. First, larger vaccine makers bought up many more bags than they could use, leaving smaller vaccine makers with no recourse and potential manufacturing sites underutilized. Then as the vaccination campaign wore on, supplies began drying up altogether. Only a few companies make the bags, and they have little incentive to ramp up their manufacturing efforts because there's no telling how long the uptick in demand will last.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/21/opinion/sunday/covid-vaccine-world.html?action=click&module=Well&pgtype=Homepage§ion=Sunday%20Review%20%20Opinion>

Exit Strategies

USOPC will require COVID-19 vaccine for all US athletes at Beijing Games

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<https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/usopc-will-require-covid-19-vaccine-all-us-athletes-beijing-games-2021-09-23/>

India likely to allow export of Sputnik Light COVID shot this month - sources

India is likely to allow the export of domestically produced doses of Russia's Sputnik Light COVID-19 vaccine this month, as the shot has yet to be approved in India, two sources with knowledge of the matter told Reuters. Local media have reported that Indian drugmaker Hetero has already manufactured 2 million doses of the single-shot vaccine, for whose approval the country's drug regulator has sought a separate "immune-bridging clinical trial" in its residents.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-likely-allow-export-sputnik-light-covid-shot-this-month-sources-2021-09-23/>

Unvaccinated but willing: The group volunteers and clinics hope to vaccinate against coronavirus

Yolanda Orosco-Arellano decided she would get the coronavirus vaccine long before it became available. But securing an appointment for it was less straightforward. The hotel housekeeper and mother of four worried about her anemia, a risk factor for severe illness from the virus. But Orosco-Arellano doesn't have a car and needed a vaccination slot scheduled around her shifts at the hotel. Barriers to getting the shot and information about the vaccines have hindered the "unvaccinated but willing," who account for approximately 10 percent of the American population, according to a report last month by the Department of Health and Human Services. Unlike those who have declined vaccines, some vocally, because of their politics or ideology, a quieter share — about 44% of unvaccinated people — say they would get vaccinated but are on the fence for certain reasons.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/09/23/covid-unvaccinated-but-willing/>

Coronavirus Vaccine Inequity a Focus at UN General Assembly

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chad's President Mahamat Idriss Deby and Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni are set to address the U.N. General Assembly on Thursday. Access to COVID-19 vaccines has been one of the major topics of the annual meeting in New York and is likely to be one of the most discussed again Thursday as leaders from African nations make up a large portion of the day's list of speakers. While some countries such as the United States have had vaccine doses widely available to their populations for months, other countries have struggled to access COVID-19 vaccine supplies.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/coronavirus-vaccine-inequity-a-focus-at-un-general-assembly-/6242394.html>

England's Covid travel rules spark outrage around the world

England's Covid travel rules and refusal to recognise vaccines administered across huge swaths of the world have sparked outrage and bewilderment across Latin America, Africa and south Asia, with critics denouncing what they called an illogical and discriminatory policy. The transport secretary, Grant Shapps, described England's rules, unveiled last Friday, as "a new simplified system for international travel". "The purpose is to make it easier for people to travel," Shapps said. But in many parts of the world there is anger and frustration at the government's decision to recognise only vaccinations given in a select group of countries.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/23/englands-covid-travel-rules-spark-outrage-around-the-world>

FDA authorizes Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine booster for older Americans and those at high risk of illness

The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday authorized a Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus booster shot for people 65 and older and adults at risk of severe illness, an effort to bolster protection for the most vulnerable Americans against the highly transmissible delta variant of the virus. In addition to older Americans, boosters should be made available to people 18 through 64 years of age at high risk of severe illness from the coronavirus and those "whose frequent institutional or occupational exposure" to the virus puts them at high risk of serious complications from the disease caused by the virus, the agency said.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/09/22/pfizer-booster-shot-fda-authorizes/>

Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine offered to Ayrshire children aged 12 to 15 as NHS tackles Covid cases

Schoolkids in Ayrshire are now being offered the Covid-19 vaccine. Youngsters aged 12 to 15 can receive a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech inoculation following a decision by Scottish Ministers to accept advice from the four UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs). Children should either attend a local drop-in vaccination clinic from today or await appointment details to arrive by post. Appointed clinics for this age group will begin on Wednesday. NHS Ayrshire & Arran's Public Health Director, Lynne McNiven, said: "The roll out of the Covid-19 vaccine to all young people aged 12-15 marks a significant milestone in the vaccination programme.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/ayrshire/pfizer-biontech-coronavirus-vaccine-offered-25054025>

Japan to double COVID-19 vaccine donations to other countries to 60 mln doses

Japan plans to give other countries 60 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said on Thursday, doubling the target from the previous pledge of 30 million doses. "Today, I am pleased to announce that, with additional contributions, Japan will provide up to approximately 60 million doses of vaccine in total," Suga said in a pre-recorded video message at the U.S.-hosted Global COVID-19 Summit.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-double-covid-19-vaccine-donations-other-countries-60-mln-doses-2021-09-22/>

The pace of first Covid-19 vaccine doses is the slowest in two months, CDC data shows, worrying health professionals as flu season approaches

The pace of people getting first doses of Covid-19 vaccines is the slowest it has been since July 23, according to data released Wednesday from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The data comes as flu season is around the corner, which could increase death tolls and put more strain on hospitals already struggling with an influx of patients and depleted resources. More than 312,000 people have initiated the vaccination process -- gotten their first shot -- over the last week, CDC data shows. That's a 7% drop from last week and a 35% drop from the previous month.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/22/health/us-coronavirus-wednesday/index.html>

New Zealand's Ardern says lockdowns can end with high vaccine uptake

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Thursday the country should aim for a 90%-plus rate of inoculation, and could drop strict coronavirus lockdown measures once enough people were vaccinated.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealands-ardern-says-lockdowns-can-end-with-high-vaccine-uptake-2021-09-23/>

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The U.K. has relaxed Covid-related travel restrictions for people attending the international climate conference in Glasgow that's now less than six weeks away. Minister-level officials from so-called red list countries, along with two staffers, won't be required to spend time in quarantine when they arrive for the COP26 conference, according to updated travel requirements. That's a change from an earlier stance that required visitors from the high risk, red-list countries to spend five days in isolation.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-23/u-k-eases-covid-travel-rules-for-cop26-climate-conference>

Portugal to Lift Limits at Restaurants, Allow Nightclubs to Open

Portugal said it will remove limits on the size of groups that can be seated at restaurants from Oct. 1 as it takes the next step in a plan to gradually lift restrictions that were put in place to contain the coronavirus pandemic. Nightclubs will be allowed to reopen, with a EU digital certificate required at the entrance, Prime Minister Antonio Costa said at a press conference in Lisbon on Friday. Portugal accelerated its Covid-19 inoculation campaign amid a new surge of cases in June, and more than

80% of the population has now completed vaccination, among the highest rates in the world.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-23/portugal-to-lift-limits-at-restaurants-allow-nightclubs-to-open>

Partisan Exits

COVID-19: Police in Canada hunt man who punched nurse in the face after she gave his wife vaccine

Police in Canada are searching for a man they suspect punched a nurse in the face for giving his wife a COVID jab without his consent. The man confronted the female nurse on Monday morning in the office of a pharmacy in Sherbrooke, southeast of Montreal, Quebec, where she had been administering vaccines. "Our suspect went directly into the office and began to yell at the nurse," police spokesman Martin Carrier told Reuters news agency.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-police-in-canada-hunt-man-who-punched-nurse-in-the-face-after-she-gave-his-wife-vaccine-12414570>

Aged care staff sacked in regional Australia for refusing to get Covid-19 vaccination

Aged care facilities struggling after exodus of anti-vaxxers are forced out. All staff must be fully vaccinated in order to work with the vulnerable group. Outstretched regional homes are particularly under pressure from the new rules

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10020345/Aged-care-staff-sacked-regional-Australia-refusing-Covid-19-vaccination.html>

PM Morrison says Melbourne anti-lockdown protesters should be 'ashamed' for actions at war memorial

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has called the actions of protesters on Wednesday at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance "disgusting." More than 200 people were arrested after an intense stand-off between protesters and police at the war memorial. Two police officers were also struck in the head with bottles while one was admitted to hospital with chest pains.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/melbourne-anti-lockdown-protest-war-memorial-b1925450.html>

Melbourne anti-lockdown protests fizzle out as daily cases hit pandemic high

Melbourne's streets were largely quiet on Thursday after three days of anti-lockdown protests, with hundreds of police officers on patrol in the city to prevent another rally as COVID-19 cases in Victoria hit a daily pandemic record. Police in central Melbourne were checking people's reasons for being outside, footage on social media showed, after a violent protest on Wednesday in Australia's second-largest city resulted in more than 200 arrests

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/melbourne-faces-more-anti-lockdown-protests-daily-cases-hit-pandemic-high-2021-09-23/>

Continued Lockdown

Ukraine tightens coronavirus lockdown curbs

Ukraine tightened coronavirus lockdown curbs on Thursday, restricting large events and occupancy at gyms, cinemas and cultural sites, after a recent steady increase in new infections. Ukraine imposed a nationwide "yellow" code after cases dropped over the summer, allowing it to lift lockdown restrictions. This week, however, the government extended a state of emergency that allows authorities to impose curbs until year-end to rein in infections. The health ministry has said it plans compulsory coronavirus vaccinations for those in occupations such as teaching and employment in state institutions and local governments.

<https://news.trust.org/item/20210923054711-47znv/>

Australians find silver lining in lockdowns as wealth booms

Australians are finding a silver lining to lockdowns as super-cheap credit lifts the value of homes and shares to record highs, a windfall of wealth that gives consumers the means to spend big once restrictions ease. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics out on Thursday showed net household wealth surged A\$735 billion (\$531.48 billion) in the June quarter to A\$13.3 trillion, or A\$522,032 for every man, woman and child. "Aussie households have never been wealthier," said Ryan Felsman, a senior economist at CommSec.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australians-find-silver-lining-lockdowns-wealth-booms-2021-09-23/>

Scientific Viewpoint

Does My Mask Protect Me if Nobody Else Is Wearing One?

There is also plenty of evidence showing that masks protect the wearer even when others around them are mask-free. The amount of protection depends on the quality of the mask and how well it fits. During a hotel outbreak in Switzerland, for instance, several employees and a guest who tested positive for the coronavirus were wearing only face shields (with no masks); those who wore masks were not infected. And a Tennessee study found that communities with mask mandates had lower hospitalization rates than areas where masks weren't required.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/21/well/live/covid-masks-protect.html>

Covid-19 Vaccines Can Be Updated for the Delta Variant. Here's How.

Scientists are working to develop shots that would target the Delta variant specifically. The mRNA platform behind some vaccines might make this process relatively straightforward, according to Matthew Johnson, senior director of product development at the Duke Human Vaccine Institute. Vaccines work by exposing the body to a harmless version or portion of a virus. This teaches our immune systems to recognize and fight the real virus if our bodies become infected with it. The mRNA-based vaccines developed for Covid-19—including the two made by Moderna Inc. and by Pfizer Inc. and partner BioNTech SE —rely on the outer spike proteins of the new coronavirus to prime our immune defenses. Spike proteins stud the outer surface of the virus and help it latch onto and infect healthy cells.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-vaccines-can-be-updated-for-the-delta-variant-heres-how-11632399254>

Novavax applies to WHO for emergency listing of COVID-19 vaccine

Novavax and its partner Serum Institute of India have applied to the World Health Organization for an emergency use listing of Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine, potentially clearing the way for the shot to ship to many poorer countries, the company said on Thursday. Novavax has been prioritizing regulatory submissions to low- and middle-income countries after falling behind in the race for authorization in the United States and Europe, which have already vaccinated most of their residents.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-applies-who-emergency-listing-covid-19-vaccine-2021-09-23/>

EU drugs regulator says to decide on Pfizer vaccine booster in early October

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) aims to decide in early October whether to endorse a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech, COVID-19 vaccine to be given half a year after the initial two-shot course, saying breakthrough infections added some urgency to its review. "The outcome of this evaluation is expected in early October, unless supplementary information is needed," EMA's head of vaccines strategy, Marco Cavaleri, told a press briefing on Thursday. Cavaleri's statement confirmed a Reuters report earlier in the day on EMA's expected review time on the matter

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-drugs-regulator-says-decide-pfizer-vaccine-booster-early-october-2021-09-23/>

The Vaccinated Aren't 'Just as Likely' to Spread COVID

For many fully vaccinated Americans, the Delta surge spoiled what should've been a glorious summer. Those who had cast their masks aside months ago were asked to dust them off. Many are still taking no chances. Some have even returned to all the same precautions they took before getting their shots, including avoiding the company of other fully vaccinated people.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/09/the-vaccinated-arent-just-as-likely-to-spread-covid/620161/>

Coronavirus unlikely to become more deadly because it's run out of 'places to go', says Oxford jab creator

Covid is unlikely to mutate into a deadlier, vaccine-evading, variant because it's run out of "places to go", the creator of the Oxford jab has said. Dame Sarah Gilbert said coronavirus is likely to become less severe in its effects. Speaking at a Royal Society of Medicine webinar on Wednesday, she said: "We normally see that viruses become less virulent as they circulate more easily and there is no reason to think we will have a more virulent version of Sars-CoV-2." Dame Sarah said that some variations were to be expected but predicted that coronavirus would eventually become like the flu virus, saying: "What tends to happen over time is there's just a slow drift, that's what happens with flu viruses. You see small changes accumulating over a period of time and then we have the opportunity to react to that."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-mutate-deadlier-virus-oxford-b1925404.html>

Oxford researchers find Llama antibodies have "significant potential" as potent Covid-19 treatment

A unique type of tiny antibody produced by llamas could provide a new frontline treatment against Covid-19 that can be taken by patients as a simple nasal spray. Research led by scientists at the Rosalind Franklin Institute in Oxford has shown that nanobodies - a smaller, simple form of antibody generated by llamas and camels - can effectively target the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19. They found that short chains of the molecules, which can be produced in large quantities in the laboratory, significantly reduced signs of the Covid-19 disease when administered to infected animals. The nanobodies, which bind tightly to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, neutralising it in cell culture, could provide a cheaper and easier to use alternative to human antibodies taken from patients who have recovered from Covid-19.

<https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2021-09-23/llama-antibodies-have-significant-potential-as-potent-covid-19-treatment>

Beijing Wantai plans large trial for nasal spray COVID-19 vaccine candidate

Chinese vaccine developer Beijing Wantai Biological Pharmacy Enterprise plans to start a large trial for its nasal spray-based COVID-19 vaccine candidate next month, a clinical trial registration record showed. The company aims to recruit 40,000 adult participants for the Phase III clinical trial, according to an entry posted on the Chinese Clinical Trial Registry on Wednesday

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/beijing-wantai-plans-large-trial-nasal-spray-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-2021-09-23/>

New Zealand's strategy to eliminate Covid-19 faces defeat by Delta strain, admits health chief

New Zealand's strategy to eliminate the coronavirus may have been defeated by the Delta strain, the country's health chief has conceded. With the country's largest city, Auckland, in lockdown since mid-August, the health director-general Dr Ashley Bloomfield has warned that the nation may not return to zero Covid-19 cases. Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister, has previously committed to elimination of the virus despite the view of her Australian counterpart, Scott Morrison, that this goal was "absurd".

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/new-zealands-strategy-to-eliminate-coronavirus-faces-defeat-by-delta-strain-admits-health-chief-qg3wh2zdw>

Valneva expands trials on COVID-19 vaccine candidate

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<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/valneva-expands-trials-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-2021-09-23/>

Covid-19: Abnormalities in the womb detected among pregnant women even after they tested negative

Analysis of 115 women in the UK, Canada and France who gave birth over the last 18 months showed far more physical abnormalities in the placenta than doctors would expect to see in a pre-2020 pregnancy. The pandemic is taking a physical toll on pregnant women – even if they do not catch Covid-19, a small international study suggests. Analysis of 115 women in the UK, Canada and France who gave birth over the last 18 months showed far more physical abnormalities in the placenta than doctors would expect to see in a pre-pandemic pregnancy. Rates of problems with the placenta, the baby’s support system in the womb, tripled among expectant mothers with Covid-19 but doubled even among those who tested negative, suggesting the changes can be caused by the sheer stress of the pandemic as well as the virus itself.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/covid-19-pregnant-women-abnormalities-womb-after-tested-negative-1214004>

Heart inflammation after COVID-19 vaccine: Are boys at higher risk?

A new, non-peer-reviewed study concluded that healthy boys aged 12–17 years had a higher hospitalization rate due to heart inflammation after their second mRNA COVID-19 vaccination than the expected hospitalization rate for COVID-19 in that age group. A non-peer-reviewed study reports on scientific research that other experts in the field have not evaluated before publication; it should not guide clinical decision-making. In the case of this paper, there are several issues with the data that the researchers used, which limits the accuracy and applicability of the study’s findings. A CDC analysis of reports of heart inflammation after COVID-19 vaccines is currently under review at a major peer-reviewed journal.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/covid-19-vaccine-are-boys-at-an-increased-heart-inflammation-risk>

‘Covid-19 will become like common cold’ by next spring, say experts who claim worst of pandemic is over

Covid-19 could soon resemble the common cold as the virus weakens and people’s immunity is boosted by vaccines and exposure, two leading experts have said. Professor Sir John Bell, regius professor of medicine at Oxford University, has claimed the coronavirus could become like a cold by as soon as next spring. He also claimed the UK “is over the worst” of the pandemic and things “should be fine” once winter has passed.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/covid-19-like-common-cold-next-spring-experts-worst-pandemic-over-1213893>

‘I Know Who Caused Covid-19’ review - the global blame game

It’s not surprising that Covid-19 has made people angry: their lives have become disrupted in unimaginable ways. People have lost family members to the disease, or suffered for months with long Covid. With the restrictions needed to keep health services afloat, small businesses have gone under, city centres have been shuttered and people have spent months without seeing loved ones. Basic freedoms that we took for granted were taken away in order to stop the spread of a dangerous virus. The questions of where it came from, and just who is responsible for all this devastation and loss, have assumed outsize importance.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/sep/23/i-know-who-caused-covid-19-review-the-global-blame-game>

EU drugs regulator to decide on Pfizer vaccine booster in early October

The European Medicines Agency aims to decide in early October whether to endorse a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech, COVID-19 vaccine to be given half a year after the initial two-shot course, saying breakthrough infections added some urgency to its review. "The outcome of this evaluation is expected in early October, unless supplementary information is needed," EMA's head of vaccines strategy, Marco Cavaleri, told a press briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-drugs-regulator-says-decide-pfizer-vaccine-booster-early-october-2021-09-23/>

U.S. CDC advisers back COVID-19 booster shots for those 65 and older, not for high-risk workers

A U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advisory panel on Thursday recommended a booster shot of the Pfizer and BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for Americans aged 65 and older and some adults with underlying medical conditions that put them at risk of severe disease.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-cdc-advisers-recommend-covid-19-vaccine-boosters-65-older-high-risk-2021-09-23/>

4DMedical lung imagery sheds more light on 'long COVID' effects

The scans by 4DMedical allow physicians to detect areas of high and low lung ventilation using existing equipment in hospitals, said founder and Chief Executive Andreas Fouras. The 'four dimensions' refers to the scan's ability to measure the phases of breath as it passes into and out of the lungs. "It takes a short video sequence. We use about 20 seconds worth of video sequence of the patient just breathing naturally," said Fouras. "From that video sequence, we're able to mathematically calculate the motion and then the airflow everywhere around the lungs."

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/4dmedical-lung-imagery-sheds-more-light-long-covid-effects-2021-09-23/>

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<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-drugs-regulator-says-decide-pfizer-vaccine-booster-early-october-2021-09-23/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Melbourne cases linger near record levels as Australia hits vaccine milestone

COVID-19 infections in Australia's Victoria state hovered near record levels on Friday as authorities stepped up the pace of vaccinations in hopes of easing restrictions with more than half the country's adult population fully vaccinated. Australia is grappling with a third wave of infections from the highly infectious Delta variant that has led to lockdowns in its two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, and the capital, Canberra, affecting nearly half the country's 25 million people.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/melbourne-cases-linger-near-record-levels-australia-hits-vaccine-milestone-2021-09-24/>

Alaska, overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients, adopts crisis standards for hospitals

Alaska, which led most U.S. states in coronavirus vaccinations months ago, took the drastic step on Wednesday of imposing crisis-care standards for its entire hospital system, declaring that a crushing surge in COVID-19 patients has forced rationing of strained medical resources.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/alaska-overwhelmed-by-covid-19-patients-adopts-crisis-standards-hospitals-2021-09-23/>

COVID-19: Global cases sees biggest fall in two months, says WHO - but UK in top five for new infections

The number of new COVID-19 cases across the world has seen its biggest fall in more than two months, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said. New coronavirus infections fell to 3.6 million cases last week - down from the global figure of four million for the previous seven days. The most COVID cases were seen in the UK, US, India, Turkey, and the Philippines.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-global-cases-sees-biggest-fall-in-two-months-says-who-but-uk-in-top-five-for-new-infections-12414464>

Singapore reports 1457 COVID-19 cases, highest since April last year

Singapore's health ministry reported 1,457 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, the highest since April last year. A recent rise in cases after the relaxation of some COVID-19 measures has prompted Singapore to pause further reopening. More than 80% of its population has been vaccinated against COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/singapore-reports-1457-covid-19-cases-highest-since-april-last-year-2021-09-22/>

Russia's COVID-19 deaths return to record daily highs

Russia on Thursday reported 820 coronavirus-related deaths in the last 24 hours, matching an all-time high set on Aug. 26, and authorities warned that cases were again rising rapidly. Moscow recorded 3,445 new infections in the last 24 hours, the most reported in a single day since July 31 following a case surge over the summer, authorities said. There were 21,438 cases recorded nationwide, they said. The Kremlin told reporters that officials were not discussing the idea of reimposing lockdown measures or other restrictions, but that the government and regional officials were monitoring the situation closely.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/russias-covid-19-deaths-return-record-daily-highs-2021-09-23/>

Brazil approaches 600,000 COVID deaths in second-deadliest outbreak

Brazil has had 24,611 new cases of the novel coronavirus reported in the past 24 hours, and 648 deaths from COVID-19, the health ministry said on Thursday. The South American country has now registered 21,308,178 cases since the pandemic began, while the official death toll has risen to 592,964, according to ministry data, in the world's third worst outbreak outside the United States and India and its second-deadliest after the United States. As vaccination advances, the rolling 7-day average of COVID deaths has fallen to less than one fifth of the toll of almost 3,000 a day at the peak of the pandemic in April.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/brazil-approaches-600000-covid-deaths-in-second-deadliest-outbreak/ar-AAOKYc7>