

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 5th Oct 2021

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### One Minute Overview

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**Italian studies show COVID-19 shots less effective in immunocompromised** - COVID-19 vaccines are less effective on people with weakened immune systems, three small Italian studies show, which the studies' researchers say highlight the need to deploy booster shots for this group of vulnerable people. [The studies show that, on average, 30% of immunocompromised patients do not develop immunity to the virus after vaccination.](#) The remaining 70% respond to the vaccine, especially after the second dose, but to a lesser extent than healthy people and with differences from group to group, the Bambino Gesù Hospital in Rome, which conducted the three small studies, said in a statement on Monday.

**Thailand joins Asian nations in rush to buy Merck's COVID-19 pill** - Thailand's government is in talks with Merck & Co (MRK.N) to buy 200,000 courses of its experimental antiviral pill for COVID-19 treatment, the latest Asian nation to scramble for supplies of the drug after lagging behind Western countries for vaccines. [Somsak Akksilp, director-general of the Department of Medical Services, told Reuters that Thailand is currently working on a purchasing agreement for the antiviral drug, known as molnupiravir.](#) South Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia said they are also in talks to buy the potential treatment, while the Philippines, which is running a trial on the pill, said it hopes its domestic study would allow access to the treatment.

**New York's largest health care provider fires 1,400 unvaccinated employees** - Northwell Health, New York State's largest health care provider, announced on Monday that it had fired 1,400 of its employees who refused to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, according to a spokesman, Joe Kemp. New York's effort to require the state's more than 650,000 hospital and nursing home workers to get vaccinated went into effect last week, prompting tens of thousands of employees who had held out to get their shots. [But others filed a flurry of lawsuits, and courtrooms across the state are determining when and how to allow exemptions to the mandate.](#) So far the number of workers in New York who have walked away from their jobs is relatively small, and not likely to result in the staff shortages that have imperiled harder-hit parts of the country during the Delta variant's rise.

**N.Y.C.'s Teacher Vaccine Mandate Prompts Thousands of Last-Minute Shots** - New York's requirement that virtually everyone who works in the city's public schools be vaccinated against the coronavirus compelled thousands of Department of Education employees to get at least one dose of a vaccine in the past week, leading to extremely high vaccination rates among educators, Mayor Bill de Blasio said Monday. [About 95 percent of all full-time school employees have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, the mayor said,](#) including 99 percent of principals, 96 percent of teachers and 94 percent of non-education staff. Roughly 43,000 doses total have been administered since the mandate was announced in late August, including more than 18,000 shots that were given to staff members since Sept. 24.

**'We are tired': Workers flee Vietnam's largest city as long lockdown eases** - Tens of thousands of people, mostly migrant workers, left Ho Chi Minh City over the weekend as the largest metropolis in Vietnam eased a months-long COVID-19 lockdown, triggering fears of labour shortages and more disruption to manufacturing. [The mass exodus comes as the city and its nearby industrial provinces struggle to ensure sufficient workers to help revive the country's economy,](#) which posted a record GDP slump in

the third quarter due to COVID-19 curbs. 'We left our home behind for the city in search for better jobs but now we are tired,' said Tran Thi Them, 32, as she queued for a compulsory COVID-19 test before leaving.

**Norway insists it hasn't 'reclassified' Covid-19 as flu** - The Norwegian health authorities have clarified reports they are 'reclassifying' the coronavirus as just another form of flu. The Scandinavian country has relaxed its Covid rules as vaccinations ramp up and the virus recedes. But it wants to make it clear it is not treating a Covid infection the same as the common cold. ['It is not correct that the Norwegian Institute of Public Health \[NIPH\] has claimed that 'Covid-19 is no more dangerous than ordinary flu.'](#) This statement is probably a misinterpretation of this interview in a large Norwegian newspaper,' a spokesperson from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) told IFLScience.

**HS: Majority of Finns don't accept refusing coronavirus vaccine on principle** - A clear majority of Finns do not approve of people who refuse to get vaccinated against the coronavirus on principle, finds a poll by Helsingin Sanomat. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the poll respondents viewed that refusing to get vaccinated on principle was unacceptable and over one-quarter (27%) that doing so was acceptable. [Understanding for the decision was limited especially among older respondents, with over 80 per cent of over 70-year-olds saying refusing on principle is unacceptable.](#) Roughly a half of under 30-year-olds estimated that it is acceptable and 41 per cent that it is unacceptable to turn down the vaccine on principle.

**Pfizer, Moderna Boosters Win EU Approval for Vulnerable** - A European Union advisory committee endorsed extra shots of Pfizer Inc.'s Covid-19 vaccine for all adults, as well as extra doses of Moderna Inc.'s for those with severely weakened immune systems. [Those ages 18 and older can get a third dose of the Pfizer vaccine, developed with BioNTech SE, at least six months after their second shot, the European Medicines Agency said in a statement Monday. For the immunocompromised,](#) extra doses of Pfizer or Moderna can be given at least 28 days after the second. The recommendation on the Pfizer shot is slightly broader than in the U.S., where it's been recommended for those ages 65 or older, those in long-term health-care facilities and those ages 50 to 64 with underlying medical conditions. "Studies showed that an extra dose of these vaccines increased the ability to produce antibodies against the virus that causes Covid-19 in organ transplant patients with weakened immune systems," the EMA said. "It is expected that the extra dose would increase protection at least in some patients."

**To Prevent the Next Pandemic, Scientists Seek One Vaccine for Many Coronaviruses** - Kayvon Modjarrad is out to win the war against this pandemic—and the next one.

An emerging-infectious-diseases researcher with the U.S. Army, Dr. Modjarrad is pursuing a vaccine to protect against a range of coronaviruses that cause disease in humans—including Covid-19 variants that might elude today's vaccines. [The goal is to prevent the next new one from spreading around the globe.](#) Such a shot might even stop coronaviruses that cause some common colds. His research team is one of roughly 20 groups around the world working on so-called universal, or pan-coronavirus, vaccines: shots that would block many related viruses at once, including ones that have yet to infect anyone. After years of battling Ebola, Zika, H1N1 pandemic flu and other new pathogens, Dr. Modjarrad and other emerging-disease experts say they want to have a vaccine in hand to blunt the next new pathogen to come along, whatever it may be.

**UK might not be over the worst, scientists warn, as Covid case numbers stay high** - Britain is heading into winter with the number of Covid cases remaining at a worryingly high level. At the same time, the nation's vaccination programme appears to have stalled. That is the bleak view of leading epidemiologists who have warned that the worst effects of the pandemic may not yet be over for the UK. [As the weather gets colder, more and more people are likely to socialise in restaurants, bars and](#)

[cinemas rather than in parks or gardens with the result that transmission rates of Covid-19 are likely to rise.](#) At the same time, employees are being encouraged to return to their workplaces, which will also drive up infections. At present, new Covid cases are being reported at a rate of about 35,000 a day - though Britain's vaccination programme has kept hospitalisations to below the 7,000 level with fewer than 200 deaths occurring every day. These figures have remained fairly stable for the past few weeks.

## **Lockdown Exit**

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<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/italian-studies-show-covid-19-shots-less-effective-immunocompromised-2021-10-04/>

### **In Alaska's Covid Crisis, Doctors Must Decide Who Lives and Who Dies**

There was one bed coming available in the intensive care unit in Alaska's largest hospital. It was the middle of the night, and the hospital, Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage, had been hit with a deluge of coronavirus patients. Doctors now had a choice to make: Several more patients at the hospital, most of them with Covid-19, were in line to take that last I.C.U. spot. But there was also someone from one of the state's isolated rural communities who needed to be flown in for emergency surgery. Who should get the final bed? Dr. Steven Floerchinger gathered with his colleagues for an agonizing discussion. They had a better chance of saving one of the patients in the emergency room, they determined. The other person would have to wait.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/03/us/coronavirus-crisis-alaska.html>

### **Thailand joins Asian nations in rush to buy Merck's COVID-19 pill**

Thailand's government is in talks with Merck & Co (MRK.N) to buy 200,000 courses of its experimental antiviral pill for COVID-19 treatment, the latest Asian nation to scramble for supplies of the drug after lagging behind Western countries for vaccines. Somsak Akksilp, director-general of the Department of Medical Services, told Reuters that Thailand is currently working on a purchasing agreement for the antiviral drug, known as molnupiravir. South Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia said they are also in talks to buy the potential treatment, while the Philippines, which is running a trial on the pill, said it hopes its domestic study would allow access to the treatment.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-talks-with-merck-200000-courses-anti-covid-pills-2021-10-04/>

### **COVID-19: Amber list and UK's traffic light system for international travel scrapped as rules simplified**

The UK's traffic light system for travel has been scrapped and replaced with just two categories - countries on the red list and everywhere else. The number of countries on the red list - currently 54 - is expected to be cut to as few as nine, with places such as South Africa, and Mexico expected to become available to quarantine-free travel. People arriving in the UK fully vaccinated against COVID-19 - and everyone under 18 - will also see changes.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-uks-traffic-light-system-for-international-travel-is-scrapped-12425623>

### **New Zealand drops COVID-19 elimination strategy under pressure from Delta**

New Zealand on Monday abandoned its long-standing strategy of eliminating coronavirus amid a persistent Delta outbreak, and will instead look to live with the virus and control its spread as its

vaccination rate rises. The Pacific nation was among just a handful of countries to bring COVID-19 cases down to zero last year and largely stayed virus-free until an outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant in mid-August frustrated efforts to stamp out transmission. "With this outbreak and Delta the return to zero is incredibly difficult," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told a news conference in a major policy shift.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-extends-auckland-lockdown-eases-some-curbs-2021-10-04/>

### **How Merck's antiviral pill could change the game for COVID-19**

A new drug by Merck significantly reduces the risk of hospitalisation and death in people who take it early in the course of their COVID-19 illness, according to the interim results of a major U.S. study released last week. It is the first oral antiviral found to be effective against this coronavirus. People who took this drug, called molnupiravir—four pills twice a day for five days—within five days of showing symptoms were about half as likely to be hospitalised as those taking the placebo. They were also less likely to die, with eight deaths in the placebo group reported within a month of treatment and none in those who received the medicine.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/science-and-technology/2021/10/how-mercks-antiviral-pill-could-change-the-game-for-covid-19>

### **MUSC says COVID-19 hospitalizations in children is higher than it's ever been**

On Oct. 4, the Medical University of South Carolina's Shawn Jenkins Children Hospital reported that the number of children admitted with COVID-19 in August and September proved to be the highest two-month total of the pandemic. In that time frame, 74 kids were admitted, making up 40 percent of all coronavirus-related admissions since the start of the pandemic. The surge doesn't stop there. In September, the hospital reported the number of kids suffering from multisystem inflammatory syndrome, an often life-threatening COVID complication, nearly doubled the previous monthly high for the pandemic. Cases during that month accounted for nearly 25 percent of all total cases at MUSC Children's Health since the start of the pandemic.

[https://www.postandcourier.com/health/covid19/musc-says-covid-19-hospitalizations-in-children-is-higher-than-its-ever-been/article\\_73199a44-2536-11ec-8859-0b7374df3bee.html](https://www.postandcourier.com/health/covid19/musc-says-covid-19-hospitalizations-in-children-is-higher-than-its-ever-been/article_73199a44-2536-11ec-8859-0b7374df3bee.html)

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Senegal records fewest daily COVID-19 cases since outbreak began**

Senegal on Monday logged only two new daily COVID-19 infections, the lowest number since the pandemic reached the country and two months after the rate of new cases hovered at record highs, the health ministry said on Monday.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/senegal-records-fewest-daily-covid-19-cases-since-outbreak-began/ar-AAP7HSZ>

### **Ulster Hospital: Two wards remain closed due to Covid-19 outbreak**

Two wards remain closed at the Ulster Hospital in Dundonald, on the outskirts of east Belfast, due to outbreaks of Covid-19. Additional cleaning and infection control measures have been put in place by the hospital to tackle the outbreak. One of the affected wards provides care specifically for elderly patients. The move is being reviewed on a daily basis, a spokesperson for the South Eastern Health trust told BBC News NI in a statement. A total of 18 patients have tested positive for the virus at the Ulster Hospital in the past two weeks, along with 23 members of staff.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-58795316>

### **Doctors grow frustrated over COVID-19 denial, misinformation**

The COVID-19 patient's health was deteriorating quickly at a Michigan hospital, but he was having none of the doctor's diagnosis. Despite dangerously low oxygen levels, the unvaccinated man didn't think he was that sick and got so irate over a hospital policy forbidding his wife from being at his

bedside that he threatened to walk out of the building. Dr. Matthew Trunsky didn't hold back in his response: "You are welcome to leave, but you will be dead before you get to your car," he said. Such exchanges have become all-too-common for medical workers who are growing weary of COVID-19 denial and misinformation that have made it exasperating to treat unvaccinated patients during the delta-driven surge. The Associated Press asked six doctors from across the country to describe the types of misinformation and denial they see on a daily basis and how they respond to it.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people-covid-facebook-americans-dna-b1931996.html>

### **Global trade is accelerating, but poorer countries need vaccines to keep up, the W.T.O. says.**

Global trade recovered from its pandemic lows faster than anticipated in the first half of 2021 and is set to grow more quickly than expected next year, lifting global growth forecasts, the World Trade Organization said Monday. The W.T.O. now forecasts global merchandise trade to grow 10.8 percent in 2021, up from the 8 percent it forecast in March, as the flow of goods recovers from last year's slump. Global trade is expected to rise 4.7 percent in 2022 as the growth rate approaches its prepandemic trend, the W.T.O. said. That trade growth has not been equal as a result of the pandemic, the group said, with developing regions in particular lagging behind because of lower vaccination rates, and supply chain disruptions continuing to weigh on trade in some areas.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/business/wto-global-trade-forecasts-vaccine.html>

### **New York's largest health care provider fires 1,400 unvaccinated employees.**

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/nyregion/northwell-employees-fired.html>

### **N.Y.C.'s Teacher Vaccine Mandate Prompts Thousands of Last-Minute Shots**

New York's requirement that virtually everyone who works in the city's public schools be vaccinated against the coronavirus compelled thousands of Department of Education employees to get at least one dose of a vaccine in the past week, leading to extremely high vaccination rates among educators, Mayor Bill de Blasio said Monday. About 95 percent of all full-time school employees have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, the mayor said, including 99 percent of principals, 96 percent of teachers and 94 percent of non-education staff. Roughly 43,000 doses total have been administered since the mandate was announced in late August, including more than 18,000 shots that were given to staff members since Sept. 24.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/nyregion/vaccine-mandate-teachers-nyc.html>

### **More community colleges are mandating coronavirus vaccination**

One by one, Maryland's community colleges are starting to require students to get vaccinated against the coronavirus — months after the state university system adopted a sweeping vaccine mandate. But Virginia's community colleges are not requiring student vaccination. Instead, they are encouraging it. That includes Northern Virginia Community College, where the first lady, Jill Biden, teaches English on the Alexandria campus. The difference between policies in the neighboring states illustrates a quiet debate that has been unfolding nationally among the public two-year colleges.

These schools, hit hard by enrollment drops during the pandemic, have been slower on the whole to embrace vaccine mandates than four-year colleges and universities.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2021/10/04/community-colleges-covid-vaccine-mandates/>

### **Senior doctors urge secondary school pupils to get vaccinated**

Senior doctors have urged secondary school children to consider getting vaccinated against Covid after the death of a healthy 15-year-old girl highlighted that young people with no underlying conditions are potentially still at risk. The rollout of Covid vaccines for healthy 12 to 15-year-olds in England started on 20 September, but the process is more complicated than for some age groups because the shots are given through schools and parental consent is needed beforehand. Dr Helen Salisbury, a GP in Oxford and a member of the Independent Sage committee, said while it made sense to deliver Covid vaccinations through schools, the programme was starting late compared with other countries and that many schools could struggle given recent cuts to school nursing and medical services.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/03/senior-doctors-urge-secondary-school-pupils-to-get-vaccinated>

### **The US is turning a corner in its fight against Covid-19, Fauci says. But it's still too early to let our guard down**

As Covid-19 numbers gradually improve, health experts have an urgent message: Don't get cocky and relax. "We can't get overconfident. Every time we do and we put our guard down ... we get another surge with another variant," said Dr. Jorge Rodriguez, a viral researcher and internal medicine physician. "So yes, things are better. But they're far from over." On average, 107,312 new cases were reported each day over the past week, according to data from Johns Hopkins University, the lowest since August 5.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/04/health/us-coronavirus-monday/index.html>

### **Amid COVID-19 booster data dilemma, EU nations' plans diverge**

A patchwork of campaigns for an extra COVID-19 shot are being rolled out across the European Union even before the region's drug watchdog rules on whether they are safe and effective. Italy, France, Germany and Ireland have already started to administer booster shots and the Netherlands plans to do so soon but only to people who are immuno-suppressed. But several EU countries are waiting for the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to give its opinion this week.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/amid-covid-19-booster-data-dilemma-eu-nations-plans-diverge-2021-10-04/>

### **'We are tired': Workers flee Vietnam's largest city as long lockdown eases**

Tens of thousands of people, mostly migrant workers, left Ho Chi Minh City over the weekend as the largest metropolis in Vietnam eased a months-long COVID-19 lockdown, triggering fears of labour shortages and more disruption to manufacturing. The mass exodus comes as the city and its nearby industrial provinces struggle to ensure sufficient workers to help revive the country's economy, which posted a record GDP slump in the third quarter due to COVID-19 curbs. "We left our home behind for the city in search for better jobs but now we are tired," said Tran Thi Them, 32, as she queued for a compulsory COVID-19 test before leaving.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/the-great-reboot/we-are-tired-workers-flee-vietnams-largest-city-long-lockdown-eases-2021-10-04/>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Thousands of Unvaccinated New York City School Employees Placed on Unpaid Leave**

Thousands of New York City school staff were barred from returning to work Monday for failing to comply with a vaccination mandate that took effect Friday afternoon. About 95% of the 150,000 employees at the city's Department of Education have been vaccinated, including 96% of teachers and 99% of principals, Mayor Bill de Blasio said Monday. Roughly 4,000 employees represented by

the United Federation of Teachers were missing from schools as of Monday afternoon, including about 2,000 teachers, the union said. Classes resumed in person on Monday as scheduled after school officials spent the weekend identifying potential shortages and deploying substitute teachers, the union said. The vaccination rate among staffers in some critical roles remained lower compared with that of teachers. About 84% of the school safety agents who provide security on campuses were vaccinated, leaving about 1,800 of the officers on unpaid leave from schools on Monday, according to union officials.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/thousands-of-unvaccinated-new-york-city-school-employees-placed-on-unpaid-leave-11633371509>

### **HS: Majority of Finns don't accept refusing coronavirus vaccine on principle**

A clear majority of Finns do not approve of people who refuse to get vaccinated against the coronavirus on principle, finds a poll by Helsingin Sanomat. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the poll respondents viewed that refusing to get vaccinated on principle was unacceptable and over one-quarter (27%) that doing so was acceptable. Understanding for the decision was limited especially among older respondents, with over 80 per cent of over 70-year-olds saying refusing on principle is unacceptable. Roughly a half of under 30-year-olds estimated that it is acceptable and 41 per cent that it is unacceptable to turn down the vaccine on principle.

<https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/20092-hs-majority-of-finns-don-t-accept-refusing-coronavirus-vaccine-on-principle.html>

### **Norway insists it hasn't 'reclassified' Covid-19 as flu**

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<https://metro.co.uk/2021/10/04/norway-insists-it-hasnt-reclassified-covid-19-as-flu-15349049/>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **EU regulator backs Pfizer vaccine booster for all adults after 6 months**

Europe's drugs regulator on Monday advised that healthy adults can receive a third, booster dose of the BioNTech/Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine six months after the second dose. The European Medicines Agency's medicines committee said the recommendation was based on data from a study of 18 to 55-year-olds, showing an increase in antibodies after a third shot. Data has shown that immunity wanes with the vaccines currently in use, and appears to wane more quickly with the BioNTech/Pfizer jab. The EMA also said that people with severely weakened immune systems may be given a booster dose of either the BioNTech/Pfizer or Moderna jabs just 28 days after their second dose. While there is no direct evidence linking antibody levels to stronger protection in those with weakened immune systems, "it is expected that the extra dose would increase protection at least in some patients," the EMA said.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-regulator-backs-pfizer-vaccine-booster-for-all-adults-after-6-months/>

### **Covid-19 Treatment News: What Drugs, Medicines Are Available for Coronavirus?**

In the battle against the Covid-19 pandemic, vaccines have emerged as the weapon of choice. Prevention of disease is always preferable to treatment, and in this case, vaccines have proven far more targeted and effective than the few Covid therapies that have emerged so far. Several, including some that received emergency-use authorization from regulators, have lost favor or been discarded as the struggle goes on to understand the coronavirus that causes Covid and how it

impacts cells, tissues and ultimately the human body. While the list of disappointments is long, some treatments have been shown to work, although more research is needed to provide effective therapy for severely ill patients.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-05/why-reports-of-drugs-for-coronavirus-are-premature-quicktake>

### **Pfizer, Moderna Boosters Win EU Approval for Vulnerable**

A European Union advisory committee endorsed extra shots of Pfizer Inc.'s Covid-19 vaccine for all adults, as well as extra doses of Moderna Inc.'s for those with severely weakened immune systems. Those ages 18 and older can get a third dose of the Pfizer vaccine, developed with BioNTech SE, at least six months after their second shot, the European Medicines Agency said in a statement Monday. For the immunocompromised, extra doses of Pfizer or Moderna can be given at least 28 days after the second. The recommendation on the Pfizer shot is slightly broader than in the U.S., where it's been recommended for those ages 65 or older, those in long-term health-care facilities and those ages 50 to 64 with underlying medical conditions. "Studies showed that an extra dose of these vaccines increased the ability to produce antibodies against the virus that causes Covid-19 in organ transplant patients with weakened immune systems," the EMA said. "It is expected that the extra dose would increase protection at least in some patients."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-04/eu-drug-panel-backs-boosters-of-pfizer-moderna-for-vulnerable>

### **Israel requires COVID-19 booster shots for stricter "green pass"**

Israel on Sunday piled pressure on its vaccinated citizens to get a booster shot by making only those who received their third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine eligible for a "green pass" allowing entry to restaurants, gyms and many other venues. Israel was an early adopter of Pfizer/BioNtech booster shots -- administering them to members of risk groups in July and by the end of August to anyone above the age of 12. Its campaign is being watched closely by other countries. The new green pass is being issued to those who received three shots or recently recovered from COVID-19, replacing a previous system that required just two shots. It raises the bar for what the government considers full immunization

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-requires-covid-19-booster-shots-strict-green-pass-2021-10-03/>

### **Covid-19 vaccines, declining antibodies and the immune memory**

Countries around the world are considering or already rolling out Covid-19 vaccine booster shots amid reports of waning immunity and breakthrough infections. As debate rages over boosters, some are asking why they might be necessary so soon after vaccination, when there should still be immune memory. Vaccines work to "train" the body to fight a specific pathogen, using inactive or weakened parts of it, or a blueprint of it, to prompt an immune system response. The body then produces antibodies, but also white blood cells known as memory cells. When the antibodies gradually level off, the memory cells remain and swing into action when faced with the real pathogen - a process known as memory response.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3150951/coronavirus-vaccines-declining-antibodies-and-immune-memory>

### **Coronavirus: BioNTech CEO says new vaccine will be needed in 2022**

The CEO of BioNTech, the company that paired with Pfizer to develop a COVID-19 vaccine, told The Financial Times on Sunday that a new vaccine formula will probably be needed by the middle of next year, as new variants to the virus are likely to emerge. Ugur Sahin, who co-founded BioNTech, said that the variants seen now are not so different from the original virus as to evade the protection that the current vaccine offers. However, Sahin warns that new variants will emerge that will be able to evade vaccines and booster shots. "This year [a different vaccine] is completely unneeded," he said. "But, by mid-next year, it could be a different situation."

<https://www.kiro7.com/news/trending/coronavirus-biontech-ceo-says-new-vaccine-will-be-needed-2022/7FEPKI5EWBBQXCUVSKATDCD5WE/>

### **To Prevent the Next Pandemic, Scientists Seek One Vaccine for Many Coronaviruses**

Kayvon Modjarrad is out to win the war against this pandemic—and the next one. An emerging-infectious-diseases researcher with the U.S. Army, Dr. Modjarrad is pursuing a vaccine to protect against a range of coronaviruses that cause disease in humans—including Covid-19 variants that might elude today's vaccines. The goal is to prevent the next new one from spreading around the globe. Such a shot might even stop coronaviruses that cause some common colds. His research team is one of roughly 20 groups around the world working on so-called universal, or pan-coronavirus, vaccines: shots that would block many related viruses at once, including ones that have yet to infect anyone. After years of battling Ebola, Zika, H1N1 pandemic flu and other new pathogens, Dr. Modjarrad and other emerging-disease experts say they want to have a vaccine in hand to blunt the next new pathogen to come along, whatever it may be.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/to-prevent-the-next-pandemic-scientists-seek-one-vaccine-for-many-coronaviruses-11633339802>

### **Johnson & Johnson to Seek F.D.A. Authorization for Booster Shot**

Johnson & Johnson is planning to ask federal regulators early this week to authorize a booster shot of its coronavirus vaccine, according to officials familiar with the company's plans. The firm is the last of the three federally authorized vaccine providers to call for extra injections, amid mounting evidence that at least the elderly and other high-risk groups need more protection. Federal officials have become increasingly worried that the more than 15 million Americans who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine face too much risk of severe Covid-19. The Food and Drug Administration on Friday scheduled a meeting on Oct. 15 of its expert advisory committee to discuss whether to grant emergency use authorization of a booster shot of Johnson & Johnson's vaccine. That is part of a broader effort by the government to shore up the protection provided by all three vaccines. Regulators last month authorized a booster shot for many recipients of Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine and are contemplating doing the same this month for recipients of Moderna's.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/04/us/politics/johnson-vaccine-booster-coronavirus.html>

### **Largest COVID-19 PCR provider announces expansion of 'cube' labs**

The UK's largest laboratory diagnostics company, Randox, has announced a nationwide expansion of ten new adaptive 'cube' laboratories across Great Britain, with facilities that provide a rapid and cost-effective model to expand laboratory provision.

[http://www.pharmatimes.com/news/largest\\_covid-19\\_pcr\\_provider\\_announces\\_expansion\\_of\\_cube\\_labs\\_1379782](http://www.pharmatimes.com/news/largest_covid-19_pcr_provider_announces_expansion_of_cube_labs_1379782)

### **Pregnant Women Benefit from Getting the COVID-19 Vaccination**

The number of women who were pregnant and also hospitalized for COVID-19 increased from 10% to 15% in late August 2021 and early September 2021, which is more than double the percentages of a year earlier, results of a study posted in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology show. "If they are exposed and infected, they run a higher risk of severe illness from this most recent Delta variant," Emily Adhikari, MD, medical director of perinatal infectious diseases at Parkland Health and Hospital System, said in a statement. "Pregnant women should get immunized as soon as possible." Investigators found that these findings are the first objective evidence of the number and severity of illness in pregnant individuals alongside the spike in the Delta variant.

<https://www.pharmacytimes.com/view/pregnant-women-benefit-from-getting-the-covid-19-vaccination>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **GSK to supply 10000 doses of COVID-19 drug to Canada**

London-based drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline PLC said on Monday it signed a deal to supply 10,000

doses of its COVID-19 monoclonal antibody therapy to the Canadian government. "With the emergence of variants of concern across the country, in particular the Delta variant, new therapies like sotrovimab are important to treating the disease in its early stages," said Ranya El Masri, head of government affairs and market access for GSK Canada. The drug, sotrovimab, developed in partnership with Vir Biotechnology Inc was approved by Canada in July to treat mild to moderate COVID-19 patients, above 12 years of age, who are at high risk for progressing to hospitalization or death.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/gsk-supply-10000-doses-covid-19-drug-canada-2021-10-04/>

### **Britain reports 35,077 new COVID-19 cases on Monday**

Britain on Monday reported 35,077 new daily COVID-19 cases, up from the 30,439 cases reported a day earlier, government statistics showed, with a further 33 deaths within 28 days of a positive coronavirus test result.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-reports-35077-new-covid-19-cases-monday-2021-10-04/>

### **Signs of encouragement as US sees drop in Covid cases and hospitalizations**

The United States has seen a dramatic drop in the number of Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations in recent weeks, a trend that epidemiologists see as an encouraging sign that the Delta wave of the virus has peaked nationally. The seven-day average of daily new cases in America dropped from about 151,000 on 14 September to about 106,000 on 29 September, a 29% decrease, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/04/us-covid-coronavirus-cases-hospitalizations-drop>

### **Russia reports record Covid deaths as official toll reaches 210,000**

Russia has reported a record number of Covid deaths for four of the past six days, as the country experiences a devastating fourth wave caused by the Delta variant and a low vaccination rate of under 30% of the adult population. On Monday, 883 deaths and 25,781 new coronavirus cases were reported, taking the official death toll to 210,000. Calculations based on publicly available mortality data suggest that the "excess death" toll between the start of the pandemic and July this year is nearly 600,000. The pandemic has reached Russia's leadership. Last month, Vladimir Putin was forced to go into self-isolation after "several dozen people" in the president's inner circle tested positive.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/04/russia-reports-record-covid-deaths-as-official-toll-reaches-210000>

### **Queensland records one new local mystery case of COVID-19**

Queensland has recorded one new local case of COVID-19, a woman in her 50s whose infection was not linked to any known clusters.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-04/queensland-records-one-new-local-mystery-case/13569240>

### **UK might not be over the worst, scientists warn, as Covid case numbers stay high**

Britain is heading into winter with the number of Covid cases remaining at a worryingly high level. At the same time, the nation's vaccination programme appears to have stalled. That is the bleak view of leading epidemiologists who have warned that the worst effects of the pandemic may not yet be over for the UK. As the weather gets colder, more and more people are likely to socialise in restaurants, bars and cinemas rather than in parks or gardens with the result that transmission rates of Covid-19 are likely to rise. At the same time, employees are being encouraged to return to their workplaces, which will also drive up infections. At present, new Covid cases are being reported at a rate of about 35,000 a day - though Britain's vaccination programme has kept hospitalisations to below the 7,000 level with fewer than 200 deaths occurring every day. These figures have remained fairly stable for the past few weeks.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/03/we-might-not-be-over-the-worst-scientists-warn-as-covid-case-numb>

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### **China reports 27 new COVID-19 cases, down from 28 a day earlier**

China reported 27 new COVID-19 cases on the mainland for Oct. 3, down from 28 a day earlier, the national health authority said on Monday. One of the new infections was locally transmitted and the rest imported, the National Health Commission said. The number of new asymptomatic cases, which China does not classify as confirmed cases, was 15, the same as reported the day before. Two of the asymptomatic cases were local, found in the northwestern Xinjiang region, and the rest imported.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-reports-27-new-covid-19-cases-down-28-day-earlier-2021-10-04/>

### **Covid-19 Australia: NSW has recorded 623 cases and six deaths**

A health bureaucrat was forced to announce NSW had recorded 623 new Covid cases and six deaths alone with the state government in chaos. Dr Jeremy McAnulty delivered the figures just hours after John Barilaro made the shock announcement he would be quitting as deputy premier on Monday. NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian three days earlier announced she would be resigning due to a corruption investigation by ICAC.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10055677/Covid-19-Australia-NSW-recorded-623-cases-six-deaths.html>

### **Russia hits record number of daily COVID-19 deaths**

Russia on Sunday reported a record daily death toll from COVID-19, the fifth time in a week that deaths have hit a new high. The national coronavirus task force said 890 deaths were recorded over the past day, exceeding the 887 reported on Friday. The task force also said the number of new infections in the past day was the second-highest of the year at 25,769. Overall, Russia, a nation of 146 million people, has Europe's highest death toll from the pandemic, nearly 210,000 people. Yet despite the country's persistent rise in daily deaths and new cases, Russian officials say there are no plans to impose a lockdown. Mask-wearing regulations are in place but are loosely enforced. Moscow briefly tried during the summer to require proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test for indoor customers at restaurants and bars, but abandoned the program after business owners complained of reduced revenues.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-covid-moscow-vladimir-putin-pcr-test-b1931475.html>

### **Australia sees COVID-19 outbreak levelling off**

Australia's Delta outbreak appears to have levelled off, with more than half the country in extended lockdowns and vaccination rates starting to approach national targets, Health Minister Greg Hunt said on Monday. Hunt said 80% of Australians will have had their first COVID-19 jabs this week, while the overall battle against the virus has been boosted by the arrival in recent days of 15,000 additional doses of treatment drug sotrovimab. The Australian government wants all COVID-19 restrictions, including travel bans, to be lifted when 80% of the population above 16 is fully vaccinated. It expects that target will be reached in mid-November.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-victoria-reports-1377-new-covid-19-cases-2021-10-03/>

### **New Zealand drops COVID-19 elimination strategy under pressure from Delta**

New Zealand on Monday abandoned its long-standing strategy of eliminating coronavirus amid a persistent Delta outbreak, and will instead look to live with the virus and control its spread as its vaccination rate rises. The Pacific nation was among just a handful of countries to bring COVID-19 cases down to zero last year and largely stayed virus-free until an outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant in mid-August frustrated efforts to stamp out transmission. "With this outbreak and Delta the return to zero is incredibly difficult," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told a news conference in a major policy shift.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-extends-auckland-lockdown-eases-some-curbs-2021-10-04/>

### **Hungary's COVID-19 deaths rise to highest since start of fourth wave**

Hungary's COVID-19 deaths and new infections jumped over the weekend to their highest level since the start of the fourth wave of the pandemic, government data showed on Monday. Health authorities registered 1,492 new infections and 31 deaths over the past three days, bringing the total number of cases to 824,876 and deaths to 30,230 since the start of the pandemic. Although the latest figures are still well below those registered during previous waves, the data reflects a slowly worsening trend. Neighbouring Serbia and Romania have seen a sharp deterioration in their COVID-19 statistics.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungarys-covid-19-deaths-rise-highest-since-start-fourth-wave-2021-10-04/>