

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 9th Feb 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern warns of more COVID-19 variants in 2022**

The COVID-19 pandemic will not end with the Omicron variant and New Zealand will have to prepare for more variants of the virus this year, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Tuesday (Feb 8) in her first parliamentary speech for 2022. Ardern's warning came as hundreds of protesters gathered outside the parliament building in the capital Wellington, demanding an end to coronavirus restrictions and vaccine mandates. "Mr Speaker, advice from experts is that Omicron will not be the last variant we will face this year," Ardern told lawmakers in the speech which was livestreamed. "It's not over. But that doesn't mean we cannot move forward. And keep making progress. And so we are," she said.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/world/new-zealand-pm-jacinda-ardern-warns-more-covid-19-variants-2022-248535>  
[1](#)

#### **Governors in 4 states plan for end to school mask mandates**

The governors of four states announced plans Monday to lift statewide mask requirements in schools by the end of February or March, citing the rapid easing of COVID-19's omicron surge. The decisions in Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey and Oregon were announced as state and local governments grapple with which virus restrictions to jettison and which ones to keep in place. The changes also come amid a growing sense that the virus is never going to go away and Americans need to find a way to coexist with it. New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy called the move "a huge step back to normalcy for our kids" and said individual school districts will be free to continue requiring masks after the state mandate ends March 7.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-education-new-jersey-ce67cdfc4373407645fbfb5223051dcd>

#### **Quarter of UK employers cite long COVID as driving absences - survey**

A quarter of British employers have cited long COVID as a main cause of long-term sickness absences, a survey by a professional body found on Tuesday, adding that it raised questions over how workers with the condition were being supported in their jobs. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is leading a strategy for the country to live with COVID, lifting restrictions as booster shots and the lower severity of the Omicron variant weaken the link between cases and death.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/the-great-reboot/quarter-uk-employers-cite-long-covid-driving-absences-survey-2022-02-08/>

#### **For burned-out health workers, exhaustion from Covid-19 surges mixes with a sense of betrayal**

Beneath the bone-deep exhaustion, burned-out health care workers say they are grappling with another feeling: betrayal. Many clinicians have felt that with the waves of Covid have come waves of abandonment — by employers unable or unwilling to protect workers, by lawmakers undercutting public health measures, and by a public resigned to the ongoing crisis. And ultimately, health workers can feel betrayed by themselves, as circumstances outside their control make it painfully difficult to care for their patients or colleagues.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/02/08/health-worker-burnout-nurses-covid19/>

#### **J.&J. Pauses Production of Its Covid Vaccine Despite Persistent Need**

A crucial Johnson & Johnson plant has stopped making its Covid vaccine, though the company says it

has millions of doses in inventory. Johnson & Johnson has quietly stopped making batches of its vaccine at its facility in the Dutch city of Leiden.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/08/business/johnson-johnson-covid-vaccine.html?referringSource=articleShare>

### **New York considers making outdoor dining a permanent fixture**

The New York City Council held a hearing on Tuesday to consider a plan to make sidewalk dining - first allowed in 2020 as a temporary measure to help blunt economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic - part of the new normal. The plan to give permanent status to thousands of "streeteries" outside of restaurants and bars has the support of Mayor Eric Adams and the New York Hospitality Alliance, an industry association. Opponents say outside dining has created unsanitary conditions, helped draw more rats to sidewalks, drawn noise complaints in some neighborhoods and reduced the number of available parking spaces.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/new-york-considers-making-outdoor-dining-permanent-fixture-2022-02-08/>

### **Global COVID response program 'running on fumes' amid budget shortfall**

A global initiative to get COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines to poorer nations has only received 5% of the donations sought to deliver on its aims this year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) and other aid groups. The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator budgeted \$23.4 billion for its efforts from October 2021 to September 2022, of which it hoped \$16.8 billion would come in the form of grants from richer countries.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/global-covid-response-program-running-fumes-amid-budget-shortfall-2022-02-08/>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Travel Nurses Make Twice as Much as They Did Pre-Covid-19**

Hospitals and lawmakers are pressing the Biden administration to review federal pandemic-relief programs that they say have distorted pay rates for travel nurses. Many nurses are making twice what they did before the pandemic or more on assignments at hospitals paying top dollar to fill big holes in their workforces. Some hospitals are using federal Covid-19 relief funds to cover part of the difference between rates for travel nurses and staff salaries. Health-industry trade groups and some members of Congress say staffing agencies matching workers with hospitals are capitalizing on a tight labor market, as many nurses have left during the pandemic, often because of burnout and fatigue.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-relief-funds-drive-up-nurse-pay-hospitals-say-11644316203>

### **U.S. CDC stands by K-12 school masking guidance as states relax rules -Walensky**

With COVID-19 cases still high nationwide, "now is not the moment" to drop mask mandates in schools and other public places, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky told Reuters on Tuesday. Her comments follow announcements by officials in New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, California and Oregon that they plan to lift indoor mask mandates for K-12 public schools and other indoor spaces in coming weeks, seeking a return to normalcy as infections spurred by the Omicron variant of the coronavirus ebb. "I know people are interested in taking masks off. I too am interested. That would be one marker that we have much of the pandemic behind us," Walensky said in an interview.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-cdc-stands-by-k-12-school-masking-guidance-states-relax-rules-walensky-2022-02-08/>

### **Vietnam receives Vero-Cell COVID-19 vaccine donated by China**

The Ministry of National Defence received 300,000 doses of Vero-Cell COVID-19 vaccine presented by the Ministry of National Defence of China at a ceremony held at Noi Bai International Airport on February 8. Addressing the event, Chinese Ambassador to Vietnam Xiong Bo said that the vaccine

donation aims to help the army and people of Vietnam overcome COVID-19, which demonstrates the sentiments of the Chinese military in particular and Chinese Government in general to the military and people of Vietnam. On behalf of the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defence, Deputy Defence Minister Sen. Lieut. Gen. Hoang Xuan Chien, thanked the Chinese side for the gift which he said is evidence of the friendly neighbourliness and solidarity between the two countries and two militaries in particular.

<https://vietnamnet.vn/en/politics/vietnam-receives-vero-cell-covid-19-vaccine-donated-by-china-814214.html>

### **Coronavirus in China: travel restrictions should continue to avoid a resurgence, researchers say**

A key to controlling the pandemic lies in the development and widespread use of vaccines that are more effective in preventing infection, says research paper China's continuous pursuit of the zero-Covid policy has come under scrutiny for its high social and economic costs

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/science/article/3166171/coronavirus-china-travel-restrictions-should-continue-avoid>

### **IBM Employees' Questions About the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Continue to Go Unanswered**

According to Against Federal Mandates, an action committee started by IBM employees who oppose IBM's vaccine mandate, on February 1st, IBM revoked badge access to all worksites and client sites for all unvaccinated employees and employees who did not submit their vaccine status. IBM also stated that it will allow those who work from home to continue to do so, at least temporarily. As IBM continues its COVID-19 vaccine mandate, US IBM employees opposed to the mandate still have unanswered questions

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/ibm-employees-questions-covid-19-13000019.html>

### **N. Korea increases virus budget after partial border opening**

North Korea plans to increase its government spending on pandemic measures by one-third this year to carry out leader Kim Jong Un's calls for a more "advanced and people-oriented" virus response, state media said Tuesday. The budget plans were passed during a session of Pyongyang's rubber-stamp parliament on Sunday and Monday, which came weeks after the North tentatively restarted its railroad freight traffic with China following two years of extreme border closures and economic decay. Kim had hinted at broader changes to the country's pandemic response during a political conference in December, when he called for a transition toward advanced anti-virus measures based on a "scientific foundation."

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-business-seoul-china-e031f33588eb12e3e23625f2f8f046f8>

### **Malaysia COVID-19 panel recommends full border reopening in March**

Malaysia's coronavirus recovery council on Tuesday said it has recommended a full reopening of borders as early as March 1 without mandatory quarantine for travellers, as part of plans to accelerate economic recovery. The Southeast Asian nation has shut its borders since March 2020 and froze the entry of foreign workers to try to contain novel coronavirus outbreaks. The recommendation comes as neighbours waive quarantine requirements to attract vaccinated tourists, including Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/malaysia-covid-19-panel-recommends-full-border-reopening-march-2022-02-08/>

### **Pfizer's COVID product sales to top \$50 bln this year, investors want more**

Pfizer Inc said on Tuesday it expects 2022 sales of its COVID-19 vaccine and antiviral pill to top \$54 billion, but that fell short of lofty Wall Street estimates and its shares were off about 3%. Still, Chief Executive Albert Bourla said final sales for its oral COVID-19 antiviral, Paxlovid, could be "way bigger" than what Pfizer has forecast since its current outlook only included contracts that have

been or are close to being signed. Pfizer currently expects \$22 billion in 2022 sales of the treatment, compared with Wall Street estimates of \$22.88 billion.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-forecasts-54-bln-2022-sales-covid-vaccine-pill-2022-02-08/>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **They knocked on strangers' doors and persuaded naysayers to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Here are their tips**

When Armani Nightengale waited in the car last March to get vaccinated against COVID-19 at Chicago's United Center, her husband was more nervous than she was. Over the next couple of weeks, he carefully checked her arm to make sure nothing looked wrong. Then, the conversation shifted to when he would get the shot. That's when things got more "combative," Nightengale said, as she began asking why he was reluctant, especially given that they had three young children. Her husband, on the other hand, felt unsure about how signing up for the vaccine would affect his immigration status.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-02-strangers-doors-naysayers-covid-vaccine.html>

### **5G and QAnon: how conspiracy theorists steered Canada's anti-vaccine trucker protest**

The brazen occupation of Ottawa came as a result of unprecedented coordination between various anti-vaccine and anti-government organizations and activists, and has been seized on by similar groups around the world. It may herald the revenge of the anti-vaxxers. The so-called "freedom convoy" - which departed for Ottawa on 23 January - was the brainchild of James Bauder, an admitted conspiracy theorist who has endorsed the QAnon movement and called Covid-19 "the biggest political scam in history". Bauder's group, Canada Unity, contends that vaccine mandates and passports are illegal under Canada's constitution, the Nuremberg Code and a host of other international conventions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/08/canada-ottawa-trucker-protest-extremist-qanon-neo-nazi>

### **Social Media Is Wired to Spread Misinformation on Covid-19 and Everything Else**

The right and left may not agree on what constitutes misinformation, but both would like to see less of it on social media. And as the world faces the third year of the Covid-19 pandemic, the threat medical misinformation poses to public health remains real. Companies like Twitter and Facebook have a stake in cleaning up their platforms — without relying on censoring or fact-checking. Censoring can engender distrust when social media companies expunge posts or delete accounts without explanation. It can even raise the profile of those who've been "canceled." And fact-checking isn't a good solution for complex scientific concepts. That's because science is not a set of immutable facts, but a system of inquiry that constructs provisional theories based on imperfect data.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-02-08/social-media-is-wired-to-spread-misinformation-on-covid-19-and-everything-else>

### **U.S.-to-Canada crossing blocked by truckers fighting Trudeau's COVID mandate**

The busiest land crossing from the United States to Canada remained shut on Tuesday, Canada's border agency said, after Canadian truckers blocked lanes on Monday to protest their government's pandemic control measures. Drivers demanding an end to federal COVID-19 vaccine mandates for cross-border traffic began blocking the streets of Canada's capital, Ottawa, on Jan. 28. Since Sunday night, police have started slowly taking back control, seizing thousands of liters of fuel and removing an oil tanker truck. Trucks started blocking traffic at the Ambassador Bridge, located between Lake Erie and Lake Huron, late on Monday. Canada's Border Services Agency said on Tuesday that the bridge was closed, but police later tweeted that U.S.-bound lanes were now open.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/angry-canada-truckers-block-busiest-bridge-with-us-trudeau-faces-grilling-2>

[022-02-08/](#)

### **Canada pushes back against GOP support for COVID protests**

Canada's public safety minister said Monday that U.S. officials should stay out of his country's domestic affairs, joining other Canadian leaders in pushing back against prominent Republicans who offered support for the protests of COVID-19 restrictions that have besieged downtown Ottawa for more than a week. A day after the city declared a state of emergency, the mayor pleaded for almost 2,000 extra police officers to help quell the raucous nightly demonstrations staged by the so-called Freedom Truck Convoy, which has used hundreds of parked trucks to paralyze the Canadian capital's business district. The protests have also infuriated people who live around downtown, including neighborhoods near Parliament Hill, the seat of the federal government.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-mandates-ottawa-truckers-protest-56a43734eb9568992360844f372c38b6>

### **New Zealand convoy protesters clog streets near Parliament**

Hundreds of people protesting vaccine and mask mandates drove in convoy to New Zealand's capital on Tuesday and converged outside Parliament as lawmakers reconvened after a summer break. The mostly unmasked protesters had driven from around the country, and their vehicles clogged the central Wellington streets for hours as they got out to meet and speak on Parliament's forecourt. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern elected not to meet with them as she delivered a speech to lawmakers outlining her priorities for the year. Among the protesters' grievances is the requirement in New Zealand that certain workers get vaccinated against the coronavirus, including teachers, doctors, nurses, police and military personnel.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-health-new-zealand-wellington-57115d5d12a448c54b9e599a6f7d8381>

### **Angry Canada truckers block busiest bridge with U.S.; Trudeau faces grilling**

The busiest land crossing from the United States to Canada remained shut on Tuesday, Canada's border agency said, after Canadian truckers blocked lanes on Monday in protest against their government's pandemic control measures. Drivers demanding an end to federal COVID-19 vaccine mandates for cross-border traffic began blocking the streets of Canada's capital, Ottawa, on Jan. 28. Since Sunday night, police have started slowly taking back control, seizing thousands of liters of fuel and removing an oil tanker truck. Trucks started blocking traffic at the Ambassador Bridge, located between Lake Erie and Lake Huron, late on Monday. Canada's Border Services Agency said on Tuesday that the bridge was closed, but police later tweeted that U.S.-bound lanes were now open.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/angry-canada-truckers-block-busiest-bridge-with-us-trudeau-faces-grilling-2022-02-08/>

### **New Zealand protesters block streets outside parliament**

Hundreds of people protesting vaccine mandates and pandemic restrictions blocked streets outside New Zealand's parliament on Tuesday with trucks and campervans, inspired by similar demonstrations in Canada. The "convoy for freedom" protesters arrived from all corners of New Zealand and gathered outside the parliament building in the capital Wellington, called the Beehive, ahead of the first speech for the year by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-pm-warns-more-covid-variants-2022-02-08/>

### **India's Modi defends handling of COVID pandemic amid opposition protests**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi defended his government's efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic over the last two years, saying on Tuesday they led to high economic growth and middling inflation, unlike the situation in some advanced economies. Economic growth is estimated at 9.2% in India's fiscal year ending in March and at 8% to 8.5% the next, after a contraction of 6.6% in fiscal 2019/20, while retail inflation hovers around 5.5%, well within the central bank's target of 2% to 6%. The government has distributed free foodgrain to 800 million people during the pandemic, while

taking steps to tame inflation, Modi told the upper house of parliament in remarks that triggered an opposition boycott of his speech.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-modi-defends-handling-covid-pandemic-amid-opposition-protests-2022-02-08/>

### **Canada's NDP leader says trucker convoy aims to 'overthrow' gov't**

Canada needs to investigate foreign interference and support for an anti-government protest in the country's capital, said New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jagmeet Singh, as the convoy of truckers and their supporters continues to wreak havoc in Ottawa. Speaking to reporters on Monday morning, Singh said the convoy's stated intent is to "overthrow the government". "It is clear that this is not a protest; this is an act to try to overthrow the government, and it is getting funded by foreign interference and we need to investigate and stop that – stop the flow of that foreign interference, particularly coming from the [United] States," said Singh, whose party has the fourth-most seats in the House of Commons. "We are calling for an emergency debate in parliament to respond to the convoy and to the escalating tensions that we're seeing," he added. The convoy of Canadian truckers and their supporters began arriving in Ottawa on January 28 to denounce an order requiring truckers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to cross Canada's land border with the United States.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/7/canada-ndp-leader-trucker-convoy-aims-to-overthrow-govt>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **Top Hong Kong Adviser 'Very Optimistic' City Will Reopen Within Year**

A top adviser to Hong Kong's leader says he's "very optimistic" the city will reopen to the world within the next year and that shortening Covid-19 quarantine for inbound travelers is the government's "next objective." "We all want to end this thing as soon as we can," Bernard Chan, a financier and convener of Chief Executive Carrie Lam's advisory Executive Council, said in a Bloomberg Television interview Wednesday. "I'm very hopeful as more data shows the omicron variant's incubation period is actually much shorter, that perhaps we can aim for a shorter quarantine time," he said. "You know, that's probably the next objective."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-09/top-hong-kong-adviser-optimistic-city-will-reopen-within-year>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Pfizer accused of pandemic profiteering as profits double**

Pfizer made nearly \$37bn (£27bn) in sales from its Covid-19 vaccine last year – making it one of the most lucrative products in history – and has forecast another bumper year in 2022, with a big boost coming from its Covid-19 pill Paxlovid. The US drugmaker's overall revenues in 2021 doubled to \$81.3bn, and it expects to make record revenues of \$98bn to \$102bn this year. The bumper sales prompted accusations from campaigners of "pandemic profiteering". The group Global Justice Now said the annual revenue of \$81bn was more than the GDP of most countries and accused Pfizer of "ripping off public health systems".

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/feb/08/pfizer-covid-vaccine-pill-profits-sales>

### **MRNA COVID-19 Vaccines are Safe for Cancer Patients: Study**

Cancer patients may not experience more complications with COVID-19 vaccines. mRNA vaccines for COVID-19 are safe for people with cancer as they are for cancer-free individuals. Researchers from Fox Chase Cancer Center tracked short-term side effects from more than 1,753 recipients of the Pfizer BNT162b2 vaccine. They found no other reactions for patients undergoing active cancer treatment or who had completed treatment. The results come from the in-person, phone, and online surveys given to people who received two doses of the mRNA vaccine, three weeks apart, between February 16 and May 15, 2021.

<https://www.medindia.net/news/mrna-covid-19-vaccines-are-safe-for-cancer-patients-study-205558-1.htm>

### **Covid vaccine gives Pfizer sales and profits a big boost**

Pfizer's sales in the fourth quarter more than doubled, thanks to strong demand for its Covid-19 vaccine. But that wasn't good enough to satisfy investors. The drugmaker said it posted revenue of \$23.8 billion, missing Wall Street's expectations of \$24.1 billion. More than half of Pfizer's total sales, \$13.9 billion, came from its vaccines unit. The company also reported net income of \$3.4 billion, topping analysts' forecasts. Pfizer said it expects \$32 billion in sales this year from Comirnaty, the Covid vaccine. Still, that was below Wall Street's expectations of nearly \$34 billion. The company's overall sales and profit guidance for 2022 also missed consensus estimates.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/covid-vaccine-gives-pfizer-sales-and-profits-a-big-boost/ar-AATBJkx>

### **Novavax falls short of COVID-19 vaccine deliveries**

Novavax Inc has delivered just a small fraction of the 2 billion COVID-19 shots it plans to send around the world in 2022 and has delayed first-quarter shipments in Europe and lower income countries such as the Philippines, public officials involved in their government's vaccine rollouts told Reuters. Novavax said it has completed delivery of around 10 million vaccine doses to Indonesia and that shipments of several million shots arrived in Australia and New Zealand on Monday. The company declined to comment on the exact number of deliveries it has made but said it is moving as quickly as possible to ship its contracted supplies for this quarter.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-underdelivers-covid-vaccine-promises-2022-02-08/>

### **Merck and Partner Ridgeback Fill U.S. Order for Covid-19 Pill**

Merck & Co. said that it had provided about 3.1 million courses of its Covid-19 pill to the U.S. government, fulfilling the terms of a federal pact that the drugmaker and partner Ridgeback Biotherapeutics LP agreed to last year. The companies said in a statement on Tuesday that they have completed manufacturing of 10 million courses of the therapy and are on track to make at least 20 million courses this year. The surge in coronavirus infections in the U.S. spurred by the omicron variant has caused demand for treatments to soar.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-08/merck-and-partner-ridgeback-fill-u-s-order-for-covid-19-pill>

### **Omicron Poses a Puzzle for Vaccine Makers**

As Covid restrictions come down throughout most of the advanced world — even Australia is preparing to welcome international visitors again — public health authorities will need to make decisions on future vaccine protocols. One possibility would be a booster shot formulated specifically for the fast-spreading omicron variant, which is behind the recent growth in infections in the U.S., U.K. and elsewhere. Bloomberg Opinion columnist Therese Raphael and Bloomberg Intelligence pharmaceutical analyst Sam Fazeli discuss a new study that casts doubt on whether such a variant-specific vaccine is worth it.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-02-08/covid-omicron-variant-poses-a-puzzle-for-booster-and-vaccine-makers>

### **'Good, not great': Some long Covid patients see their symptoms improve, but full recovery is elusive**

How long does long Covid last? And what does it mean to achieve full recovery? If you ask Joni White, she'll tell you she just wants to feel like herself again — or something close to it. And she's almost there. Retired from federal law enforcement, White now describes herself as a glass artist but she's been out of her studio for more than a year. On New Year's Eve 2020, Covid-19 hit her so hard she thought she might die. Her infected but asymptomatic sister cared for her for three weeks in a house on the Outer Banks in North Carolina until her crushing headaches, chest tightness, and brain fog eased. But back home in Hillsborough, N.C., White's headaches and brain fog were still there in April, along with frustration and depression at not being able to carry out what had been

ordinary tasks, much less fusing glass into art.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/02/08/long-covid-patients-clinics-symptoms-improve-recovery-elusive/>

### **New conditions common 1 to 5 months after positive COVID test**

A cohort study of Americans tested for SARS-CoV-2 infection shows that new-onset shortness of breath, heart rhythm abnormalities, and type 2 diabetes were more common 31 to 150 days after testing positive for COVID-19 than among those with negative results. The research was published today in JAMA Network Open. A team led by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) researchers examined new signs and symptoms among 144,768 nonhospitalized and 23,933 hospitalized people 20 years and older with a positive COVID-19 test, and 1,227,510 nonhospitalized people with a negative test. Among the 338,024 people younger than 20 years, 25,327 nonhospitalized and 1,338 hospitalized people tested positive, and 260,660 nonhospitalized and 50,699 hospitalized patients had a negative test result.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/02/new-conditions-common-1-5-months-after-positive-covid-test>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Proportion of Covid-19 deaths in over-80s highest for more than a year**

People aged 80 and over are accounting for more deaths involving Covid-19 in England and Wales than at any point since December 2020, new analysis shows. However, the number of deaths in the current wave of the virus remains well below levels reached during the second wave last winter. Some 856 of the 1,355 of deaths that occurred in the week ending January 21 2022 and which mentioned coronavirus on the death certificate were among over-80s - the equivalent of 63.2%. This is the highest proportion since the week to December 18 2020, when it stood at 64.0% (2,115 of 3,306 deaths). The proportion had dropped to nearly half this level during the summer of 2021, dipping to 37.9% in the week to July 2 2021.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/covid-people-office-for-national-statistics-england-wales-b2010131.html>

### **Covid-19 update: Global infections are approaching 400 million**

Covid -19 infections have now passed 76 million. Meanwhile, the US coronavirus death toll has increased to more than 905,000 according to Johns Hopkins University data. Democratic leaders in the US Congress held a moment of silence on Monday to commemorate the 900,000 American lives lost to the Covid-19 pandemic. New Jersey school districts will be allowed to drop a mask mandate next month, Governor Phil Murphy is expected to announce Monday. The move will be effective 7 March, with flexibility for districts to decide on their own requirements.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/covid-19-update/>

### **Italy reports 101,864 coronavirus cases on Tuesday, 415 deaths**

Italy reported 101,864 COVID-19 related cases on Tuesday, against 41,247 the day before, the health ministry said, while the number of deaths rose to 415 from 326. Italy has registered 149,512 deaths linked to COVID-19 since its outbreak emerged in February 2020, the second-highest toll in Europe after Britain and the eighth highest in the world. The country has reported 11.77 million cases to date. Patients in hospital with COVID-19 - not including those in intensive care - stood at 18,337 on Tuesday, down from 18,675 a day earlier.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/italy-reports-101864-coronavirus-cases-tuesday-415-deaths-2022-02-08/>

### **Germany's COVID situation isn't yet under control - health minister**

Germany's coronavirus situation is still not under control and an Omicron infection wave is still expected to peak around mid-February, Health Minister Karl Lauterbach said on Tuesday. "The situation is not really under control yet," Lauterbach told journalists during a news conference in Berlin. Germany on Tuesday reported 169,571 new daily case and the seven-day infection incidence

rose to a record of 1,441 cases per 100,000.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/germanys-covid-situation-isnt-yet-094645609.html>

### **Turkey logs 111,096 COVID cases, 231 deaths in 24 hours, ministry says**

Turkey has recorded 111,096 new COVID-19 infections in the space of 24 hours, just below the record daily high from the previous week, as well as its highest daily death toll in months, health ministry data showed on Tuesday. In late December, daily cases stood at about 20,000 but have since surged due to the highly transmissible Omicron variant of the coronavirus. On Friday, Turkey reported a record 111,157 infections. Data on Thursday also showed 241 people died due to COVID-19 in the same 24-hour period, the highest daily toll since Nov. 3, while Health Minister Fahrettin Koca urged citizens to complete their vaccination and the elderly to exercise more caution.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/turkey-logs-111096-covid-cases-231-deaths-24-hours-ministry-says-2022-02-08/>

### **Japan reports daily record of 159 COVID deaths - Kyodo**

Japan reported 159 coronavirus deaths on Tuesday, a daily record, Kyodo news agency said. It also recorded 101,278 new cases, Kyodo added, amid a surge in infections driven by the Omicron variant that has prompted the government to reinstate curbs in most parts of the country. A total of 1,141 coronavirus patients were in serious condition across Japan as of Tuesday, the health ministry said, down from the previous day yet hovering around a four-month high

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-reports-daily-record-155-covid-deaths-kyodo-2022-02-08/>

### **US lawmakers mark 900,000 COVID deaths in the country**

United States legislators have held a moment of silence at the Capitol to mark 900,000 COVID deaths in the country. The officials walked onto the steps of the seat of the US legislature carrying lights and stood silently as US Army Chorus performed Shall We Gather at the River and God Bless America on Monday. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer stood at the front of the crowd of bipartisan legislators. "Tonight, I joined Members of Congress for a Moment of Silence to pay tribute to the more than 900,000 Americans tragically lost to COVID-19," Pelosi later wrote on Twitter. "In their memories, let us continue our work to bring an end to this pandemic." Shortly before legislators held their observance, the Washington National Cathedral tolled its funeral bell 900 times.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/8/us-lawmakers-mark-900000-covid-deaths-in-country>

### **US records 60,000 COVID-19 deaths in January**

Late last week America's pandemic death toll reached 900,000—with 60,000 deaths recorded in January alone—and 100,000 deaths logged since Dec 13. January's death toll doubled November's, the month before Omicron became the dominant variant in the country. According to NBC News, Tennessee, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania have the most deaths when adjusted for population. "After nearly two years, I know that the emotional, physical, and psychological weight of this pandemic has been incredibly difficult to bear," President Biden said in a statement released late last week. Though the surge of Omicron cases is decreasing across the country, hospitalizations and deaths are expected to remain high throughout the month.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/02/us-records-60000-covid-19-deaths-january>

### **COVID-19 cases climb higher in parts of Asia**

Hong Kong today reported a record 614 cases, nearly all of them locally acquired, according to the Centre for Health Protection. The surge in cases and shortages of imported food due to transport disruptions have led to panic buying at supermarkets, according to Reuters. Meanwhile, on China's mainland, the Guangxi province city of Baise, home to 3.6 million people, is on lockdown. The city's outbreak started with one case in a returning traveler who tested positive on Feb 5, with mass

testing turning up 98 more cases, according to the South China Morning Post. The city is in southern China near the border with Vietnam. At the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, 24 more COVID-19 cases were reported in athletes and staff, raising the total to 387, according to China's Olympic committee. The country has a closed-loop system to separate Olympic participants from the public.  
<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/02/covid-19-cases-climb-higher-parts-asia>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **China locks down southern city as omicron variant surges**

China has ordered inhabitants of the southern city of Baise to stay home and suspended transportation links amid a surge in COVID-19 cases at least partly linked to the omicron variant. Classes have been suspended, non-essential businesses closed and mass testing of residents ordered. Restaurants are only permitted to serve take-out. Traffic lights have been switched to red only to remind drivers to stay home. As of Tuesday, 135 cases had been reported in the city — at least two of them found to be omicron, health authorities said.

<https://apnews.com/article/winter-olympics-coronavirus-pandemic-sports-health-business-cf7d91b2e27ad904d3a73a33643032c5>

### **Hong Kong Curbs Private Gatherings With Tightest Covid Rules Yet**

Hong Kong will limit gatherings in private homes for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic began, in an attempt to keep residents from socializing as it fights an outbreak that risks dashing its strategy of keeping out the virus long term. The city will limit multi-household gatherings on private premises to two families starting Thursday, but authorities won't go door-to-door to check if the rule is being followed. It will also restrict public gatherings to two people, down from four currently, and expand the list of venues where entry is limited to those who are vaccinated to shopping malls, food markets and hair salons. "Now given this severe epidemic, I hope the public will accept that we have to go back to the most stringent level," Chief Executive Carrie Lam said on Tuesday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-08/hong-kong-leader-urges-residents-to-stay-home-as-virus-spreads>

### **Hong Kong's COVID misery deepens with new social restrictions, vegetable shortage**

Hong Kong announced stringent new coronavirus restrictions and record new infections on Tuesday, while a shortage of vegetables added to the misery as truck drivers who tested positive for COVID-19 were unable to bring them from mainland China. The Asian financial hub reported a record 625 coronavirus cases on Tuesday, with cases likely to continue rising rapidly, authorities said. There were 2,600 infections over the past two weeks compared with just two in December. Responding to the worrying trend, Hong Kong's leader Carrie lam said public gatherings would be limited to two people from four currently, while churches and hair salons would close from Thursday, joining a slew of venues already closed.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-leader-says-city-stick-with-dynamic-zero-covid-strategy-now-2022-02-08/>