

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

24th Aug 2022

Lockdown Exit

Masks not needed in most situations as S'pore becomes Covid-19 resilient: Experts

After going through two Covid-19 Omicron waves without its healthcare system being overwhelmed, Singapore is ready to move to the next phase, where indoor mask wearing is no longer mandatory except on public transport and in hospitals, experts said. Singapore handled the Omicron waves successfully without having to reimpose strict measures, noted Associate Professor Alex Cook, vice-dean of research at the National University of Singapore's Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health. "The first Omicron wave, earlier in the year, still had some restrictions in place, and we managed to avoid the healthcare system being overwhelmed. In the second, which is ebbing away now, we managed to avoid overwhelming the healthcare system with almost no restrictions except indoor mask wearing. Thus, we are ready to move to the next phase," he said.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/masks-not-needed-in-most-situations-as-spore-becomes-covid-19-resilient-experts>

Pfizer Picks China Firm Involved in Drug Recall for Covid Pill

Pfizer Inc. has picked a Chinese drug-making giant once embroiled in a global medicines recall for supplying tainted ingredients to make its Covid-19 antiviral pill in the country. Zhejiang Huahai Pharmaceutical Co. will produce and sell Paxlovid in mainland China for five years, the companies said Thursday in separate statements. Pfizer will provide ingredients to make nirmatrelvir, the antiviral portion of the drug, and ritonavir, which slows the antiviral's breakdown in the body. Huahai will manufacture and combine the two into Paxlovid.

<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/pfizer-picks-china-firm-involved-in-drug-recall-for-covid-pill-1.1809083>

Western University to require vaccinations and masking, says updated COVID-19 policy

Effective Sept. 1, students, staff, and faculty are still required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and to wear medical-grade masks in classrooms and seminar rooms, with the exception of those presenting, performing, and/or speaking to a group who can remain two metres apart. But new this year, the University will also require all attendees to have received at least one booster shot.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9077218/western-university-vaccinations-masks-boosters-covid-policy/>

The Covid-19 Financial Crisis That Wasn't

The sudden realization in mid-March 2020 that Covid-19 was going to be a once-in-a-century pandemic created the kind of disruption that financial crises are made of. Pundits predicted an unprecedented triple shock: lockdowns would decimate demand, travel bans would devastate supply, and the "dash for cash" would freeze financial activity. Stock markets plunged and bond yields jumped. But despite the disastrous human toll and the inevitable economic downturn, the financial crisis didn't happen. To understand what went right, our research team at the Yale Program on Financial Stability compiled a database of some 9,000 government actions in 180 countries. The lessons: Go big, go early, and prepare for next time.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-08-23/the-covid-19-financial-crisis-that-wasn-t>

Dr Anthony Fauci to step down in December: How the top doctor became face of US' COVID-19 response

Dr Anthony Fauci who became the face of COVID-19 response in America is all set to step down as chief medical adviser to US President Joe Biden. Announcing his decision on 22 August, 81-year-old

Fauci said he would also depart from his role as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) in December this year to “pursue the next chapter” of his career. Fauci added that even though he would be leaving his current positions, he is not retiring. “After more than 50 years of government service, I plan to pursue the next phase of my career while I still have so much energy and passion for my field,” Reuters quoted him as saying. As per The New York Times, Fauci’s decision to quit does not come as a surprise as the top US doctor had said last month that he was thinking of retiring and would “almost certainly” do it by 2025.

<https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/world/dr-anthony-fauci-to-step-down-in-december-how-the-top-doctor-became-face-of-us-covid-19-response/ar-AA10Zmpt>

China says COVID has exacerbated decline in births, marriages

China's National Health Commission said COVID-19 has contributed to the decline in the country's marriage and birth rates that has accelerated in recent years due to the high costs of education and child-rearing. Many women are continuing to delay their plans to marry or have children, it said, adding that rapid economic and social developments have led to "profound changes". Young people relocating to urban areas, more time spent on education and high-pressure working environments have also played their part, it added.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-says-covid-has-exacerbated-decline-births-marriages-2022-08-23/>

The deadly virus Nigerians fear more than COVID-19: Lassa fever

Inside a Nigerian hospital ward treating Lassa, a virus that infects 100,000 to 300,000 people in West Africa every year.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/8/21/the-deadly-virus-nigerians-fear-more-than-covid-19-lassa-fever>

Exit Strategies

Malaysia reports 2078 new COVID-19 infections, 10 new deaths

Malaysia reported 2,078 new COVID-19 infections as of midnight Monday, bringing the national total to 4,759,830, according to the health ministry. There are 12 new imported cases, with 2,066 cases being local transmissions, data released on the ministry's website showed. Another 10 deaths have been reported, pushing the death toll to 36,155. The ministry reported 3,290 new recoveries, bringing the total number of cured and discharged to 4,685,979.

<https://english.news.cn/20220823/1ecbf3f1535c4329914b82ed2ac3f227/c.html>

Fauci on COVID conspiracy theories: ‘What we’re dealing with now is just a distortion of reality’

Anthony Fauci, who on Monday announced that he is leaving the Biden administration, pushed back on conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic hours later, calling the claims “a distortion of reality.” “What we’re dealing with now is just a distortion of reality, conspiracy theories which don’t make any sense at all pushing back on sound public health measures, making it look like trying to save lives is encroaching on people’s freedom,” Fauci said on MSNBC’s “The Rachel Maddow Show.” False claims and criticisms, particularly about the origins of the COVID-19 virus, Fauci said, “impeded a proper response to a public health challenge” and continue to interfere with addressing public health issues.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/3611899-fauci-on-covid-conspiracy-theories-what-were-dealing-with-now-is-just-a-distortion-of-reality/>

Pfizer COVID shots appear 73% effective in children under 5

Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine was 73% effective in protecting children younger than 5 as omicron spread in the spring, the company announced Tuesday. Vaccinations for babies, toddlers and preschoolers opened in the U.S. in June after months of delay. Only about 6% of youngsters ages 6 months through 4 years had gotten at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by mid-August,

according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Health authorities authorized tot-sized vaccine doses made by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech based on a study showing they were safe and produced high levels of virus-fighting antibodies. But there was only preliminary data on how that translated into effectiveness against symptomatic COVID-19.

<https://thehill.com/homenews/ap/ap-health/pfizer-covid-shots-appear-73-effective-in-children-under-5/>

Vaccine fatigue is real. These experts say messaging on COVID boosters should be clear

COVID-19 vaccines aimed at both the original strain and Omicron variants are expected in Canada this fall. But messaging on booster doses has been mixed across the country. Some experts like virologist Angela Rasmussen recommend getting the first available booster, while others like Manitoba's Chief Provincial Public Health Officer Dr. Brent Roussin say his province will wait to open up fourth doses for all adults until new bivalent vaccines are approved.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/vaccine-fatigue-is-real-these-experts-say-messaging-on-covid-boosters-should-be-clear-1.6558559>

47% Of U.S. Adults Took An At-Home COVID-19 Test In The Past 3 Months, Survey Reveals

Despite the recent ease of COVID-19 restrictions, nearly half of U.S. adults (47%) say they took an at-home COVID-19 test at some point in the past three months after feeling sick, according to new data from the Forbes Health-Ipsos Monthly Health Tracker survey. Additionally, of the 1,120 U.S. adults polled between August 16 and 17, 65% stayed home or away from people they don't live with if they felt ill, 44% isolated from people inside their household and 27% took a PCR COVID-19 test from a doctor or testing site. (Respondents could choose multiple answers.) If you're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, such as a cough, fever or chills, or just want peace of mind when traveling and gathering with others, there are many testing avenues available.

<https://www.forbes.com/health/body/covid-19-test-survey/>

Japan to ease Covid entry requirements, raise cap on entrants

Japan is planning to stop requiring proof of a negative Covid-19 test result from entrants to the country as long as they have completed three rounds of vaccinations, while also raising the cap on those entering the country

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/travel/2375170/japan-to-ease-covid-entry-requirements-raise-cap-on-entrants>

Japan weighs relaxing border rules on COVID -media

Japan may lift requirements for pre-departure COVID-19 tests for travellers and raise daily caps on entrants, domestic media have reported. Japan has some of the strictest pandemic border measures among major economies, requiring travellers to present a negative coronavirus test taken within 72 hours of departure. The government may soon waive tests for vaccinated passengers, with the change taking effect in a few weeks, Nikkei reported late Monday. A daily cap of inbound travellers may be raised from 20,000 to 50,000 as early as next month, Fuji News Network said on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-weighs-lifting-pre-departure-covid-tests-travellers-media-2022-08-23/>

Thai cabinet approves 18.4 billion baht for NHSO COVID-19 medical expenses

The Thai cabinet approved an 18.447 billion baht budget for the National Health Security Office (NHSO) to cover medical expenses, medication, vaccines and equipment used in the treatment of COVID-19 patients between April 1st and May 15th. The NHSO has played a key role in arranging for COVID-19 patients to be treated in hospitals or in home isolation free of charge until they recover.

<https://www.thaipbsworld.com/thai-cabinet-approves-18-4-billion-baht-for-nhso-covid-19-medical-expenses/>

Partisan Exits

People less willing to comply with Covid-19 rules, or listen to Prime Minister Jacinda

Ardern according to Government survey

New Zealanders are complying less with Covid-19 rules as people's attention shifts to issues like the cost of living, according to research from the Government's own Covid survey. The survey shows a significant drop off in the willingness of people to trust the Prime Minister as the main source of truth about the pandemic. People remain confident in their ability to identify misinformation, and twice as many people use mainstream media for Covid information as use social media. At least every eight weeks, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet receives a survey of how New Zealanders feel about Covid-19. It looks at how much people are willing to comply with health rules and whether they trust health messaging on the virus, along with broader health messaging.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/people-less-willing-to-comply-with-covid-19-rules-or-listen-to-prime-minister-jacinda-ardern-according-to-government-survey/XC42SWUJNPNG6PXSXKW5HSPP07I/>

WA police officer Ben Falconer loses legal challenge against COVID-19 vaccine mandate

Ben Falconer lost his legal case against WA's vaccine mandate. The judge found the measure was justified in a pandemic. He said the vaccine mandate was supported by experts

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-23/police-officer-loses-challenge-against-wa-covid-vaccine-mandate/101359438>

UK Covid inquiry bill already at £85m as government hires top law firms

Bills for the Covid-19 public inquiry have already hit £85m despite hearings not starting until next year, after the government hired top legal and public relations firms. Departments making key decisions during the pandemic have hired leading law firms on multimillion-pound contracts alongside specialist firms tasked with sifting through millions of sensitive documents and emails for disclosure. As current and former ministers prepare to face intense scrutiny of their actions when hearings begin in earnest in summer 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care, which oversaw controversial policies on admissions of potentially infected hospital patients into care homes, has hired Pinsent Masons on a £2.2m legal services contract, and the Cabinet Office has hired the same firm on a £7m "public inquiry response unit co-partnering contract".

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/aug/22/uk-covid-inquiry-bill-already-at-85m-as-government-hires-top-law-firms>

US CDC announces major changes after criticism of its responses to covid-19 and monkeypox

The US national public health agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will make major changes to its structure and systems in the light of a review of its emergency response to the covid-19 pandemic. Announcing the changes on 17 August, Rochelle Walensky, CDC director, admitted that the agency had failed in its responses to covid-19 and monkeypox. She said that the proposed changes would strengthen and speed the CDC's response to public health threats and improve its communications. "For 75 years CDC and public health have been preparing for covid-19, and in our big moments, our performance did not reliably meet expectations," she said. "As a long time admirer of this agency and a champion for public health, I want us all to do better, and it starts with CDC leading the way." The CDC has been criticised for releasing a flawed test early in the covid-19 pandemic that delayed accurate reporting of cases; confusing advice about social distancing, masking, and vaccinations; and poor communications. Scott Gottlieb, former head of the Food and Drug Administration, also criticised the CDC's response to the monkeypox outbreak for being slow and having problems with testing and vaccination

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o2074>

Mexico to protest to U.N. over missing COVAX vaccines

Mexico will file a complaint to the United Nations over the failure to deliver vaccines against COVID-19 that the government bought under a program backed by the World Health Organization

(WHO), President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said on Monday. Mexico was owed \$75 million, Lopez Obrador said, for COVID-19 vaccines meant to be supplied under COVAX, which was established by WHO during the pandemic to help distribute vaccines equitably across the world.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexico-submit-complaint-over-failure-deliver-covax-vaccines-2022-08-22/>

Anti-mandate protesters converge on New Zealand Parliament

About 2,000 protesters upset with the government's pandemic response converged Tuesday on New Zealand's Parliament — but there was no repeat of the occupation six months ago in which protesters camped on Parliament grounds for more than three weeks. Many of the protesters said they had no intention of trying to stay. And police ensured a repeat was unlikely by closing streets, erecting barricades and banning protesters from bringing structures onto Parliament's grounds. The previous protest created significant disruptions in the capital and ended in chaos as retreating protesters set fire to tents and hurled rocks at police. This time there was also a counter-protest, with several hundred people gathering in front of Parliament as the main march entered the grounds. The two sides shouted insults but a line of police officers kept them physically separated.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-new-zealand-wellington-8a53cebd7b749faba3a6c8b989a41427>

Part of Billionaire Soon-Shiong's Africa Vaccine Plant For Rent

Part of a Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing plant in South Africa launched by US biotech billionaire Patrick Soon-Shiong and President Cyril Ramaphosa is available to rent after a plunge in demand for the shots. The facility in Cape Town, announced in January after the continent had struggled to secure vaccines, is meant to produce a billion doses a year by 2025. One of the two buildings in the A-grade facility with modern offices and a warehouse is available for lease as the owners of the campus wait for "their production requirements to scale up," according to Shane Howe, Broll Property Group's regional head of industrial broking.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-23/part-of-billionaire-soon-shiong-s-africa-vaccine-plant-for-rent>

Scientific Viewpoint

EMA evaluating Skycovion COVID-19 vaccine

EMA has begun its review of the conditional marketing authorization application from South Korean developer, SK biosciences, for its COVID-19 vaccine, Skycovion, a recombinant protein-based vaccine with adjuvant from GSK. The evaluation of data for ...

https://www.biopharma-reporter.com/Article/2022/08/22/ema-evaluating-skycovion-covid-19-vaccine?aca_news_section=Global+Industry+News

Pfizer and BioNTech seek FDA EUA for Omicron-based Covid-19 vaccine

Pfizer and BioNTech have filed an application seeking Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a booster dosage of an Omicron BA.4/BA.5-adapted bivalent vaccine for Covid-19 in people aged 12 years and above. The submission comes after the regulatory agency provided guidance to incorporate clinical findings of the bivalent Omicron BA.1-adapted vaccine. The FDA also sought the vaccine's pre-clinical and manufacturing data for addressing the SARS-CoV-2 virus' evolution.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/pfizer-biontech-eua-omicron-vaccine/>

Study reveals safety of COVID mRNA vaccines for patients with heart failure

COVID mRNA vaccines are associated with a decreased risk of death in patients with heart failure, according to research presented at ESC Congress 2022. The study also found that the vaccines were not associated with an increased risk of worsening heart failure, venous thromboembolism or myocarditis in heart failure patients.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220822/Study-reveals-safety-of-COVID-mRNA-vaccines-for-patients-with-heart-failure.aspx>

FDA authorizes Novavax's COVID-19 vaccine for teens

The Food and Drug Administration on Friday cleared Novavax's coronavirus vaccine for emergency use in children 12 to 17 years old, giving adolescents a third option to prevent COVID-19 as they return to school. The agency's decision comes a month after the FDA authorized the shot for adults and more than a year after teenagers became eligible for the messenger RNA shots from Pfizer and, later, Moderna. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention signed off on the FDA's decision Monday.

<https://www.biopharmadive.com/news/fda-novavax-authorize-12-17-teenagers-covid-vaccine/630200/>

Your first brush with coronavirus could affect how a fall booster works

In the beginning, when the coronavirus was new, the quest for a vaccine was simple. Everyone started out susceptible to the virus. Shots brought spectacular protection. But the next chapters of life with the virus — and the choice of booster shots for the fall and beyond — will be complicated by the layers of immunity that now ripple through the population, laid down by past infections and vaccinations. When it comes to viral infections, past is prologue: The version of a virus to which we're first exposed can dictate how we respond to later variants and, maybe, how well vaccines work.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/08/22/coronavirus-immune-response-boosters/>

Struggling with brain fog after a COVID-19 infection? You're not alone, experts say

COVID-19 is linked to an increased risk of developing brain fog and dementia after an infection, according to a recent medical study. More than 596 million COVID-19 cases have been recorded globally — including nearly 10 million in Australia — and many of the long-term impacts are yet to be seen. However, the recent study helps shed light on the risk of neurological disorders after an infection. Here's what we know about brain fog and how COVID-19 affects your brain.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-23/brain-fog-a-symptom-of-long-covid-19/101355350>

Incidence of type 2 diabetes in youth increased during COVID-19 pandemic

The onset of type 2 diabetes (T2D) among the youth is rising globally. In fact, a 5% increase in its incidence was reported by the SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth Study from 2002 to 2012 in the United States, while its incidence nearly doubled between 2001 and 2017. The Treatment Options for T2D in Youth (TODAY) study has shown that such an increase can lead to rapid β -cell failure, along with the early onset of numerous complications in approximately half of the youth with T2D in the U.S.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220822/Incidence-of-type-2-diabetes-in-youth-increased-during-COVID-19-pandemic.aspx>

What do we know about covid-19 vaccines in under 5s?

It took a year for covid-19 vaccines to be tested and approved for use in children. As countries now reach out to the youngest age group, David Cox reports on the evidence for their effectiveness and deployment. On 18 June 2022, regulators in the US voted to authorise the rollout of Pfizer and Moderna's covid-19 vaccines to children under the age of 5, meaning that the jabs will now be available to an estimated 20 million babies and toddlers.¹ The decision sees the US join Argentina, Bahrain, Chile, China, Cuba, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela in offering covid-19 vaccines to the youngest age category. Regulators in Europe are predicted to follow in the coming weeks.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/378/bmj.o1892>

Pfizer's COVID vaccine 73.2% effective in kids under 5, new data shows

Pfizer Inc and BioNTech's vaccine was 73.2% effective in preventing COVID-19 among children aged 6 months through 4 years, new data from the companies showed on Tuesday, two months after the U.S. rollout of the shots began for that age group. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was authorized for children under 5 years of age in June, based on data that showed the vaccine generated a similar

immune response as in older age groups

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-biontech-covid-shot-732-effective-kids-under-5-new-data-2022-08-23/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Chinese tourists stranded in Tibet as coronavirus cases in China reach three-month high

The Tibetan local government says more than 4,000 tourists are stranded in the region. The outbreak in the south-west province is spreading across China, including to Shanghai. Coronavirus cases numbers in China are at a three-month high

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-23/china-tourists-stranded-highway-tibet-covid-19-coronavirus/101356470>

China reopens the door to foreign students after 2 years of Covid lockouts

Students with valid residence permits will be able to re-enter the country from Wednesday, according to notices at various embassies. Decision only applies to long-term academic study and not to vocational courses

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3189927/china-reopens-door-foreign-students-after-2-years-covid>

Coronavirus: UAE reports 612 Covid-19 cases, 591 recoveries, no deaths

The UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention on Tuesday reported 612 cases of the Covid-19 coronavirus, along with 591 recoveries and no deaths. Total active cases stand at 19,292. The new cases were detected through 225,410 additional tests. The total number of cases in UAE as on August 23 are 1,011,011, while total recoveries stand at 989,378. The death toll now stands at 2,341.

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/coronavirus/coronavirus-uae-reports-612-covid-19-cases-591-recoveries-no-deaths>

New South Australian COVID-19 modelling shows next wave of cases coming in November

There have been fewer than 1,000 new COVID-19 each day in South Australia. A new wave is expected in November. The Health Minister says the modelling does not take into account any new variants

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-23/sa-covid19-modelling-shows-new-wave-coming-in-november/101361194>

Japan reports record daily COVID-19 deaths at over 330

Japan saw a record 343 daily COVID-19 deaths on Tuesday amid the ongoing seventh wave of coronavirus infections, exceeding the previous high of 327 logged during the previous wave in late February, according to a tally of new cases across the country. The death toll is also quickly mounting as monthly virus-related deaths exceeded 5,000 for the first time on Tuesday with more than a week left to go in August. Newly confirmed infections also reached 208,551 after dipping under 200,000 the previous day, heightening concern that as infection cases remain high, related deaths are likely to increase further. Osaka Prefecture reported 42 new deaths from coronavirus infection, while there were 25 confirmed in both Tokyo and neighboring Kanagawa and 19 each in Saitama and Fukuoka.

<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/08/d245781781dd-breaking-news-japan-reports-record-daily-covid-19-deaths-at-over-330.html>

Hong Kong police chief tests positive for Covid-19; rise in serious cases 'expected' expert says

Hong Kong's police chief has become the latest high-profile figure to test positive for Covid-19, as a leading microbiologist said that the steady rise in cases requiring hospital treatment was "within expectation." The government announced on Tuesday that the Commissioner of Police Raymond Siu tested positive for Covid-19 through a rapid antigen test and was undergoing isolation.

<https://hongkongfp.com/2022/08/23/hong-kong-police-chief-tests-positive-for-covid-19-rise-in-serious-cases-expected>

[-expert-says/](#)