

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 26th Nov 2020

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### News Highlights

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#### **Bulgaria latest to impose lockdown to control Covid-19 surge**

Bulgaria had weathered the first wave of the pandemic with relatively few casualties but now schools, restaurants, [shopping malls and gyms have been shut until December 21 as the country fights to contain a surge in new coronavirus infections](#). Prime Minister Boyko Borissov said that the measures were being introduced to ease the pressure on hospitals which were straining under the load of the increased number of cases.

#### **Centre gives power to Indian states to decide on Covid restrictions**

A day after a strategy meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several of his state leaders on Tuesday, [the Central Government has allowed states and union territories in India to impose restrictions as they see fit](#), including night curfew, based on the situation in their territories. However, states have been forbidden from imposing local lockdowns outside the containment zones without permission from India's central government.

#### **U.S. daily death toll crosses 2,000 for the first time since May**

More than 200,000 people tested positive for Covid-19 across the U.S. and 2,100 people died due to the virus on Tuesday, [as the number of people dying reached levels not seen since May, when the first wave was raging in the country](#). The increased numbers come just as millions of Americans prepare to travel to be with their families over the Thanksgiving holiday, raising fears of even higher numbers to come over the next few months.

#### **China increases inspections on imported food packaging amid fear of virus spread**

Chinese health officials are increasing virus testing on imported food packaging even as the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic rages across much of the world, with cooler weather aiding in the spread of the infection. [Health officials have said that while the chances are miniscule](#), there is still a possibility of the virus being passed from packaging to human beings, although no such cases have been confirmed yet scientifically.

### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Britain to detail post-lockdown restrictions in England**

The British government on Thursday will set out which COVID-19 restrictions each local authority in England will face when a national lockdown ends next week allowing businesses to reopen in areas where infection rates are lower. Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered England into a month-long lockdown in early November after coronavirus cases and deaths started to rise again, angering businesses and some of his own political party over the economic consequences. He set out new measures on Monday to replace the lockdown from Dec. 2, reinforcing a previous regional approach and warning that some areas would move into a higher alert level than the one they were in before. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-restrictio/britain-to-detail-post-lockdown-restrictions-in-en>

[gland-idUKKBN286001](#)

### **COVID-19: Mystery as coronavirus is found in sewage in major Queensland city**

Seventeen suburbs on high alert after traces of COVID-19 were found in sewage Cairns, Far North Queensland, has not had a case of coronavirus for months People in the area urged to get tested if they experience COVID-19 symptoms

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8986141/COVID-19-Mystery-coronavirus-sewage-major-Queensland-city.htm>  
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### **UK Covid lockdown scientist 'hopeful' of booking spring holiday**

Professor Neil Ferguson, whose modelling led to a complete shutdown in March and April, said he was confident vaccinations would lead to social distancing being lifted. He told a symposium yesterday hosted by the Abdul Latif Jameel Institute for Disease and Emergency Analytics (J-IDEA) at Imperial College, where he works: "I think it will vary from place to place, but in the UK or much of Europe, I think we will see a very difficult two or three months ahead as we go through winter.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/uk-covid-lockdown-scientist-hopeful-booking-spring-holiday-3046464>

### **'Relocation of the nation' expected to spike next month**

They were once the cities people would move to for work but the coronavirus pandemic has made things look dramatically different now. While people have anecdotally shared stories of people moving from Melbourne after the Victoria's harsh lockdown restrictions, new data shows just how true that is. But Melburnians don't want to move to Sydney either, with the city being snubbed for Brisbane. South Australians are also heading to the sunshine state, according to Muval, a national online removalist booking platform.

<https://www.news.com.au/finance/relocation-of-the-nation-expected-to-spike-next-month/news-story/7de23c8ce177f5ae3953be31206aa57f>

### **How Australia succeeded in lowering COVID-19 cases to near-zero**

Unlike other nations, including Canada, which have aimed to maintain new infections at a level that won't overwhelm the medical system, Australia set out to virtually eliminate the virus from its shores. When Australia was hit with a surge of COVID-19 cases in late July just weeks after declaring victory against the first wave, it prompted one of the world's longest lockdowns in Melbourne, for example, closing virtually everything that wasn't a grocery store or hospital for nearly four months. In many cities, roadblocks were established to ensure people stayed home. Even when restrictions were eased there was a nightly curfew, and in the initial lockdown people weren't allowed to be more than five kilometres away from home in certain regions. Break a rule, and you could face a fine of \$1,300.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/australia-covid-19-pandemic-lockdown-1.5813280>

### **UK spent 849 million pounds on COVID dining subsidy**

Britain's government spent almost twice as much as expected on encouraging people to eat in restaurants, cafes and pubs during what proved to be a temporary lull in COVID-19 cases in August. Official figures released on Wednesday ahead of new spending plans from finance minister Rishi Sunak showed his Eat Out to Help Out scheme cost 849 million pounds, much more than an initial government estimate of 500 million pounds.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-furlough/uk-estimates-2-7-million-people-on-furlough-at-end-of-september-idUKKBN285175>

### **Coronavirus pandemic: Germany seeks EU deal to close ski resorts**

Germany is seeking an agreement with EU countries to keep ski resorts closed until early January, in an attempt to curb the spread of coronavirus. "I will say this openly that it won't be easy, but we will try," Chancellor Angela Merkel said after speaking to Germany's regional leaders on Tuesday. The

news came as the country extended its partial lockdown until 20 December. Some of the early European coronavirus hotspots were at ski resorts, helping spread infections across the continent.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-55081476>

### **Coronavirus: Domestic abuse offences increased during pandemic**

The number of domestic abuse offences recorded by police in England and Wales has increased during the pandemic. But the Office for National Statistics said such offences gradually rose in recent years so it cannot be determined if it was related to the pandemic. Police recorded 259,324 domestic abuse offences between March and June - 7% up on the same period in 2019. During and after the first lockdown in April, May and June, roughly one-fifth of offences involved domestic abuse.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55073229>

### **'Zero infection' unlikely without drastic action to curb Covid-19**

Beijing has agreed to set aside some vaccine supplies for Hong Kong if needed, Carrie Lam says. Experts say lack of public support makes it hard to implement lockdown, compulsory testing

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3111383/zero-infection-unlikely-hong-kong-without-drastring>

### **General: COVID-19 vaccines will be ready for delivery 24 hours after FDA authorization**

Gen. Gustavo Perna, who is leading Operation Warp Speed's effort to distribute coronavirus vaccines nationwide, told ABC News he is confident that vaccines will be "on the street" and headed to communities just 24 hours after being authorized by the Food and Drug Administration. While the first two vaccines to be distributed will likely be from Pfizer and Moderna, Alex Azar, the U.S. secretary of health and human affairs, described the news from Astra Zeneca's clinical trials as "very promising" and noted that the company's vaccine is already being produced in the country so it too can be ready for distribution once authorized by the FDA. Perna and Azar made their comments in exclusive interviews with ABC News' correspondent Bob Woodruff during a visit to Operation Warp Speed's offices at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/general-covid-19-vaccines-ready-delivery-24-hours/story?id=74368606>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **As COVID-19 Vaccine Nears, Employers Consider Making It Mandatory**

Just a few months into the coronavirus pandemic, Holly Smith had already made up her mind. She was not going to reopen her restaurant to diners until there was a vaccine. She just didn't think it was safe. When she shared the decision with her staff, they asked: Would the vaccine be mandatory? Yes, she said. It would be. "I'm not going to open until I can indeed be sure that everyone on my staff is vaccinated," says Smith, chef and owner of Cafe Juanita in Kirkland, Wash. "The immediate people on the team — you've got to take care of them. If you don't take care of them, they cannot help you take care of business."

<https://www.npr.org/2020/11/25/937240137/as-covid-19-vaccine-nears-employers-consider-making-it-mandatory>

### **Greater Manchester's largest NHS trust draws up Covid-19 vaccination plans for staff**

Manchester's largest NHS trust is drawing up plans to vaccinate its staff against coronavirus. The Manchester Evening News has seen an early internal planning document circulated within Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust runs a number of hospitals including Manchester Royal Infirmary, Wythenshawe Hospital, Saint Mary's Hospital, Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and Trafford General. Several potential Covid-19 vaccines are in the later stages of clinical trials, but still have to pass safety tests. It's not yet known whether - or when - a vaccine could be approved for use. But in line with Government instruction the NHS in all settings is gearing up to be ready to roll out vaccination programmes from any date in December, although mass vaccination is said to be more likely to happen in the new year.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/hospital-nhs-covid-19-vaccination-19329529>

### **Manchester braces for return to Tier Three: Mayor Andy Burnham predicts government will plunge region back under toughest Covid curbs when UK-wide lockdown ends on December 2**

Andy Burnham said it is 'more likely than not' that GM will go into 'very high' level Decision will be announced tomorrow over which regions go into which tiers. It will come into force when national lockdown ends next Wednesday, 00.01am. He had stand-off with Ministers last month whether to place GM into tier three

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8986619/Coronavirus-UK-Manchester-braces-return-tier-three-Englands-lockdown-ends.html>

### **Christmas UK lockdown lift: Dr Hilary Jones warns plan could spell disaster**

Dr Hilary Jones has slammed the UK as a 'weak nation' if it feels like the five day Christmas lockdown lift is necessary. The Good Morning Britain medical expert has warned that the government's plans for a five-day break from coronavirus lockdown rules over the festive period could have an enormous effect on the country going forward. Trying to break it down into simpler terms, he added that we could lose the advantage we currently have on keeping coronavirus contained. 'I think controlling the virus is like trying to control your weight. It's easy to put weight on, it's very difficult to lose it,' he explained.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/11/25/christmas-uk-lockdown-lift-dr-hilary-jones-warns-plan-could-spell-disaster-13651202/>

### **COVID Christmas rules: What's allowed during the festive season?**

Coronavirus rules will be relaxed over the festive season across the UK with people allowed to celebrate in three-household "Christmas bubbles" with their families. Leaders in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have all agreed that groups can meet at home, outdoors or in a place of worship from 23 to 27 December. Individuals will also be able to travel between tiers and across the whole of the UK without restriction within the five-day period for the purposes of meeting with their bubble.

<https://news.sky.com/story/a-covid-christmas-whats-allowed-during-the-festive-season-12138882>

### **How do you exit a lockdown effectively? Listen to the experts**

European countries enduring a second wave of COVID-19 have once again locked down. There are signs that these measures are curbing the spread of the coronavirus. But experts warn certain steps are necessary if Europe is to successfully exit this period of lockdown and avoid repeating past mistakes.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11/lockdowns-in-europe-seem-to-be-working-again-but-then-what/>

### **Covid lockdown in France: Macron's sobering message to the nation**

President Macron announced an easing of restrictions in France last night while preparing the nation for an unfamiliar festive season of sobriety, home-cooked meals and early nights. In a televised address Mr Macron, who placed France in lockdown on October 29, said that he planned to lift it on December 15 if daily new infections fell below 5,000 by that date.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/covid-lockdown-in-france-macrons-sobering-message-to-the-nation-5fs8ndlh2>

### **France's lockdown to ease as Macron says second peak has passed**

President Emmanuel Macron has announced a three-step route out of lockdown for France ahead of the Christmas season, declaring the second coronavirus peak to be 'over'. People will be able to visit non-essential shops and go to museums and cinemas by mid-December - but won't be able to enjoy a meal in a restaurant or a gym workout until late January as the Government strives to keep infection rates down. It comes after a month of tight restrictions, with residents currently requiring a

permission slip to leave their homes, although schools and some workplaces remain open.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/11/25/frances-lockdown-to-ease-as-macron-says-second-peak-has-passed-13651657/>

### **French government pledges more support for businesses as lockdown measures eased**

The French government is pledging an additional €1.6 billion to help businesses forced to remain shut, despite the easing of lockdown restrictions. Restaurants and gyms will remain closed until at least January 20, while no date has been given for the re-opening of bars or nightclubs. The extra funds will be used to expand a grant scheme to help firms cover their costs during the crisis. Meanwhile, business groups have welcomed news that all shops will be allowed to open from Saturday.

<https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/business-daily/20201125-french-goverment-pledges-more-support-for-businesses-as-lockdown-measures-eased>

### **President Emmanuel Macron on Gradual Easing of Lockdown in France, Covid-19 Vaccinations: Video**

French President Emmanuel Macron said he will gradually lift a nationwide lockdown from Saturday, as he attempts to avoid a resurgence of the coronavirus. He also commented on Covid-19 vaccinations in a televised address, Tuesday

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2020-11-25/france-s-macron-announces-gradual-easing-of-lockdown-video>

### **France announces limited lockdown easing with Europe wary of festive surge**

France has announced a limited easing of its strict nationwide lockdown and Germany and Spain have outlined restrictions on Christmas and new year gatherings as European governments act to prevent Covid cases multiplying over the holiday period. The announcements came as the second wave of the pandemic continued to cause daily death tolls not seen in the worst hit countries since the spring: Spain recorded 537 new deaths on Tuesday and Italy a further 853, its highest daily toll since the end of March.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/24/france-to-ease-covid-lockdown-with-europe-wary-of-festive-surge>

### **'Essential workers' likely to get earlier access to Covid-19 vaccine**

Essential workers are likely to move ahead of adults 65 and older and people with high-risk medical conditions when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention signs off on Covid-19 vaccine priority lists, coming after health care workers and people living in long-term care facilities, a meeting of an expert advisory panel made clear Monday. The intention is to bring many people of color closer to the front of the vaccine priority line — should they want to be vaccinated — in recognition of the fact that the pandemic has disproportionately hit Black and Latino communities.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/11/23/essential-workers-likely-to-get-earlier-access-to-covid-19-vaccine/>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **London Tories split over tiered approach after Covid lockdown**

Leading London Tories are split over whether varying lockdown rules should be imposed on different areas of the capital depending on local infection rates. The mayor, Sadiq Khan, claimed there is consensus for tier 2 restrictions being introduced across London next week when the current lockdown is eased. "London's leaders have worked very closely together on a cross-party basis and are united on this: our city going into tier 2 next week would seem the right and sensible decision," he tweeted. But this apparent agreement threatens to unravel after lobbying by Tory MPs to allow areas with lower infection rates to have less stringent restrictions. The latest public figures show infection rates per 100,000 in the capital's 32 boroughs vary from 113 in Camden to 387 in Havering.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/nov/24/london-tories-split-over-tiered-approach-after-covid-lockdown>

### **Germany Merkel: Car rams into chancellery gate ahead of Covid decision**

A car has been driven into the gates of Angela Merkel's Federal Chancellery building in Berlin, German police say. A 54-year-old man was detained but the background to the incident was unclear. The Volkswagen car had messages daubed in white on both sides. One called for an end to "globalisation politics" while another referred to "you damned killers of children and old people". The incident came hours before Mrs Merkel held talks with regional leaders on extending Covid safety measures.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-55069047>

### **Pope Francis takes aim at anti-mask protesters: 'They are incapable of moving outside of their own little world'**

In his new book, "Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future," to be released Dec. 1, the head of the 1.3 billion-member Roman Catholic Church lambastes those who protest the health measures aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19: "Some groups protested, refusing to keep their distance, marching against travel restrictions — as if measures that governments must impose for the good of their people constitute some kind of political assault on autonomy or personal freedom," he writes.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/pope-francis-lambasts-anti-mask-protests-what-matters-more-to-take-care-of-people-or-keep-the-financial-system-going-2020-11-24>

### **Limestone Coast community defends MP Nick McBride over his COVID-19 lockdown comments**

Cross-border community members and a regional MP have jumped to defend the Member for MacKillop's comments, after he broke ranks from the Liberal Party on Monday. Nick McBride lashed out at the State Government over its handling of the latest coronavirus outbreak, saying the hard lockdown was an overreaction which "hung businesses out to dry". He said health authorities should not have "taken the word of one person" to impose a lockdown on the entire state.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-25/sa-lockdown-covid-q19-border-mp-nick-mcbrides-criticism/12918746>

### **German restaurant bears out pandemic with furry customers**

The owner of a Frankfurt restaurant is staging a protest against the coronavirus lockdown in Germany by filling his tables with a hundred stuffed toy pandas, in a play on the word "pandemic". German officials are expected on Wednesday to agree to extend until Dec. 20 a "lockdown light" they imposed on Nov. 2 that means bars, restaurants and entertainment venues must stay closed, while shops and schools can remain open. "We wanted to put some life back into our restaurant," said Giuseppe Fichera, manager of restaurant Pino. "They are Panda-Mic pandas."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany-panda-prot/german-restaurant-bears-out-pandemic-with-furry-customers-idUKKBN2851OV>

### **'The fight continues': Colombia protests persist despite pandemic**

Hundreds of people gathered at a street corner in downtown Bogota on Monday to commemorate the anniversary of Dilan Cruz's death. His mother and sister arranged a circle of flowers on the street where the 18-year-old was shot by police a year earlier during an anti-government protest, with his clothes and a framed portrait placed in the centre. Throughout the vigil, the mostly young crowd chanted: "Dilan didn't die, Dilan was killed!"

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/25/the-fight-continues-colombia-protests-persist-amid-pandemic>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **We asked over 2,000 Australian parents how they fared in lockdown. Here's what they said**

Parents have faced unprecedented stress during the pandemic as they care for children while juggling paid work from home. However, very little research so far has focused on family well-being during the pandemic. So we asked more than 2,000 parents to tell us in their own words about the

pandemic's impact on their families. We did this in April 2020, during Australia's first lockdown. Our published study is the largest of its kind in Australia, and one of very few internationally looking into families' experiences of the pandemic.

<https://theconversation.com/we-asked-over-2-000-australian-parents-how-they-fared-in-lockdown-heres-what-they-said-150545>

### **Germany plans Christmas curbs as COVID-19 deaths hit record**

Germany reported a record 410 COVID-19 deaths over 24 hours just before federal state leaders and Chancellor Angela Merkel were due to discuss an extension of pandemic-related restrictions into December and for the Christmas and New Year holidays. The 16 federal states are expected to decide on Wednesday to extend the "lockdown light" until Dec. 20. This will keep bars, restaurants and entertainment venues shut while schools and shops stay open.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-germany/germany-plans-christmas-curbs-as-covid-19-deaths-hit-record-idUKKBN2850TX>

### **France's new coronavirus cases, hospital numbers drop sharply**

The number of new coronavirus infections and the number of people in hospital with the virus in France dropped sharply as a national lockdown went into its fourth week. The health ministry reported the number of new cases rose by 9,155 to 2.15 million on Tuesday, compared with 4,452 on Monday - when numbers are usually low due to weekend reporting lags - and compared with 45,522 last Tuesday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-france-casualties/frances-new-coronavirus-cases-hospital-numbers-drop-sharply-idUKKBN2842XO>

### **Can't dine out? UK restaurants offer DIY meal kits to survive lockdown**

From fast food to fine dining, some restaurants in Britain are relying on home kits to keep them afloat during lockdown, turning clients into cooks who recreate favourite meals in the comfort of their own kitchens. For brothers James and Thom Elliot, the lockdowns provided an unexpected lifeline for their "pizza in the post" Pizza Pilgrims business. The venture now sells over 1,000 kits a day delivered by couriers.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-restaurant/cant-dine-out-uk-restaurants-offer-diy-meal-kits-to-survive-lockdown-idUKKBN285000>

### **Lithuania extends lockdown as COVID-19 cases surge**

Lithuania on Wednesday extended its coronavirus lockdown until Dec. 17, when the new government is expected to take over. The outgoing government said the lockdown had stabilised new infections at about 11,000 per week, twice as high as during the week of Nov. 4 when the three-week lockdown was announced. "The spread has slowed somewhat, but the situation remains really serious," Health Minister Aurelijus Veryga said during a televised cabinet session.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/healthcare-coronavirus-lithuania/lithuania-extends-lockdown-as-covid-19-cases-surge-idINKBN2851P4>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **I'm a medical writer who just got vaccinated against COVID-19, maybe. You can still join the clinical trial.**

Earlier this week, the drug company AstraZeneca announced that its vaccine was highly effective against COVID-19. That's great news for society. We now have three vaccines against the disease that are getting closer to winning approval. It also was good news for me. I think. Maybe. I hope. At some point in my adult life, I developed an obsession with numbers — especially the kind that might reveal the odds of something happening, such as who will win the presidential election. Or whether the Packers should go for it on fourth and three. Or what my chances are of dying of COVID-19.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2020/11/25/medical-writer-just-got-vaccinated-against-covid-19-maybe/6393672002/>

### **New Covid-19 Vaccines Stir Hope for the World's Poor**

With three Western vaccines showing promising effectiveness and a coalition of international health agencies gaining traction, there is cautious optimism in the scramble to secure some doses for the world's poorest countries. Promising trial results inspire optimism in the developing world, which could yet become a reservoir for the virus for years to come if this issue is not addressed

[https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-covid-19-vaccines-stir-hope-for-the-worlds-poor-11606309201?mod=hp\\_lead\\_pos1](https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-covid-19-vaccines-stir-hope-for-the-worlds-poor-11606309201?mod=hp_lead_pos1)

### **Blood tests for Covid-19 could be made 'up to 100,000 times more sensitive' by using nanodiamonds**

Exclusive: Pregnancy test-like sticks are currently being trialled for Covid-19. But they, like the widely-used HIV equivalent, use gold nanoparticles. A red line is made to indicate a positive result when gold particles stick to virus. But using glowing nanodiamonds instead of gold particles gives a stronger signal and is also much more sensitive

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-8986219/Blood-tests-Covid-19-100-000-times-sensitive-using-nanodiamonds.html>

### **Tier 1 had 'little impact' on Covid-19 transmission, study suggests**

Researchers analysed how well the UK Government's tiers worked in England, before the second national lockdown came into effect. Tier 1 restrictions were largely inadequate and Tier 2 rules were only effective in around half of local authority areas, according to the University of East Anglia study. Tier 3 restrictions seemed to be effective in most areas, the research which has not yet been peer-reviewed found. However, the researchers say the real problem lies with regions not being allocated to the most appropriate tier swiftly enough.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/uk/tier-1-had-little-impact-on-covid-19-transmission-study-suggests/>

### **A Cluster-Randomized Trial of Hydroxychloroquine for Prevention of Covid-19**

The analysis included 2314 healthy contacts of 672 index case patients with Covid-19 who were identified between March 17 and April 28, 2020. A total of 1116 contacts were randomly assigned to receive hydroxychloroquine and 1198 to receive usual care. Results were similar in the hydroxychloroquine and usual-care groups with respect to the incidence of PCR-confirmed, symptomatic Covid-19 (5.7% and 6.2%, respectively; risk ratio, 0.86 [95% confidence interval, 0.52 to 1.42]). In addition, hydroxychloroquine was not associated with a lower incidence of SARS-CoV-2 transmission than usual care (18.7% and 17.8%, respectively). The incidence of adverse events was higher in the hydroxychloroquine group than in the usual-care group (56.1% vs. 5.9%), but no treatment-related serious adverse events were reported.

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2021801>

### **After dosing mix-up, latest COVID-19 vaccine success comes with big question mark**

Some evidence suggests that slowly escalating the dose of a vaccine more closely mimics a natural viral infection, leading to a more robust immune response. "It's not really mechanistically pinned down exactly how it works," Hill says. Because the different dosing schemes likely led to different immune responses, Hill says researchers have a chance to suss out the mechanism by comparing vaccinated participants' antibody and T cell levels. The 62% efficacy, he says, "is a blessing in disguise." But Moore says the low-dose prime group resulted in too few cases to be confident in its results. "Was that a real, statistically robust 90%?" he asks.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/11/after-dosing-mix-latest-covid-19-vaccine-success-comes-big-question-mark>

### **Researchers Say 90% Of Recent Coronavirus Sequences In U.K. Came From Spain**

The U.K is on its second lockdown, and scientists say most sequences of new cases are from a coronavirus strain that originated in Spain — which British tourists brought home from summer vacations.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/11/24/938593219/researchers-say-90-of-recent-coronavirus-sequences-in-u-k-came-from-spain>

### **Young people's anxiety levels doubled during lockdown: Study**

New research adds to a growing body of evidence that young people's anxiety levels doubled during Covid-19 lockdown. The study, published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, revealed that the number of young people with anxiety doubled from 13 per cent to 24 per cent, during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/science/young-peoples-anxiety-levels-doubled-during-lockdown-study/articleshow/79406152.cms>

### **Gender-based violence was predictable, and preventable, fallout of lockdown**

The National Commission for Women sounded an alarm in early April that domestic violence cases had spiked in just the first week of the Covid-19 lockdown, as had distress calls. This was echoed by the UN Secretary-General who used the term 'shadow pandemic.' Since then, across the world, police, shelters and helplines have confirmed that although the incidence of domestic violence was always higher than we would like to admit, there was an alarming increase in its frequency during the pandemic.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-invisible-pandemic-7064335/>

### **AstraZeneca Faces Difficult Questions About Its Vaccine After Admitting Mistake**

Some trial participants only got a partial dose of AstraZeneca's vaccine. Experts said the company's spotty disclosures have eroded confidence.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/25/business/coronavirus-vaccine-astrazeneca-oxford.html>

### **First round of US lockdowns cost about \$6million for each death that was avoided, study finds**

Study looked at cost of government-ordered shutdowns from March to May. Found that lockdowns saved 29,000 lives at a total cost of \$169 billion. Costs included job losses and declines in companies' market value. Study comes as states impose new restrictions and virus surges

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8983935/First-round-lockdowns-cost-6million-death-avoided-study-finds.html>

### **China stepping up virus testing on imported food packaging**

China is stepping up virus inspections on imported food packaging as cooler weather brings new waves of coronavirus infections in several overseas countries, Chinese officials said Wednesday. Packaging is "not exempt" from carrying the virus, deputy director of the National Food Safety Risk Assessment Center Li Ning told reporters. While the coronavirus positivity rate for tests on packages was just 0.48 per 10,000, that proportion is increasing along with the number of tests being conducted, Li said. She said the virus could "to some extent" be passed to humans from packaging, although neither Li or any other official at Wednesday's news conference mentioned any such confirmed cases.

<https://apnews.com/article/china-global-trade-food-safety-coronavirus-pandemic-6bb5d6cc90a3e34fb4607a6285ff5d64>

### **How Iceland hammered COVID with science**

Driving along Reykjavik's windswept roads on a cold March morning, Kári Stefánsson turned up the radio. The World Health Organization had just announced that an estimated 3.4% of people infected

with SARS-CoV-2 would die — a shockingly high fatality rate, some 30 times larger than that for seasonal influenza. There was a problem with that estimate, however: it was based on reported cases of COVID-19, rather than all cases, including mild and asymptomatic infections. “I couldn’t figure out how they could calculate it out without knowing the spread of the virus,” recalls Stefánsson, who is the founder and chief executive of deCODE genetics, a human-genomics company in Reykjavik. He became convinced that making sense of the epidemic, and protecting the people of Iceland from it, would require a sweeping scientific response.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-03284-3>

### **World scrambles for vaccine deals as COVID infections near 60 million**

Countries around the world agonised over new coronavirus curbs ahead of Christmas and other holidays as global infections approached 60 million on Wednesday and U.S. officials pleaded with Americans to stay home over Thanksgiving. The holiday weekend is expected to fuel a surge of infections in the United States, which leads the world with soaring COVID-19 infections and the daily toll on Tuesday climbing above 2,000, the highest 24-hour tally since early May. “All the Thanksgiving travel ensures no one will catch us, either,” said Dr. Tatiana Prowell of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. “The U.S. ‘each person for himself’ mindset is killing hundreds of thousands of us. Devastating to watch,” Prowell said on Twitter.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus/world-scrambles-for-vaccine-deals-as-covid-infections-near-60-million-idUKKBN2851N3>

### **Sinopharm applies for approval from China to launch vaccine: state media**

Chinese pharmaceutical giant files for regulatory approval, according to Xinhua Finance. China National Biotec Group executive says data review is not complete but Sinopharm chairman says vaccines are protective and safe

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3111347/coronavirus-sinopharm-applies-regulatory-approval-china-launch>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Soaring Covid-19 Hospitalizations Again Put Traveling Nurses in Demand**

As the number of people hospitalized due to the coronavirus rises across the U.S., hospitals are turning to a tactic they used in earlier surges: hiring more traveling nurses. Demand is so great that hospitals are paying as much as twice the usual hourly pay for nurses, in one case \$140 an hour, traveling-nurse agencies and hospital-industry leaders say. Hospitalizations, which have set new records every day for two weeks, hit a fresh high of 85,836 on Nov. 23, according to the Covid Tracking Project. That is higher than any of the prior surges in the U.S., where hospitalizations—at their highest—were pushing the 60,000 mark.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/soaring-covid-19-hospitalizations-again-put-traveling-nurses-in-demand-11606326781>

### **Potential COVID-19 surge following Thanksgiving could cause 'humanitarian crisis,' experts warn**

As Americans prepare for what will likely be an untraditional Thanksgiving, health experts and state officials are pleading with the public to heed their warnings to not travel and to avoid large gatherings and the mixing of households, as the country tries to get ahold on what experts call an “uncontrolled” spread of the coronavirus. “If we layer in travel and large indoor gatherings which we know are drivers of transmission, we expect to see a massive surge on top of an already dire situation,” said Dr. John Brownstein, chief innovation officer at Boston Children's Hospital and an ABC News contributor, warning that such a surge could result in a “humanitarian crisis.”

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/potential-covid-19-surge-thanksgiving-humanitarian-crisis-experts/story?id=74365407>

### **How Do We Stop This Surge? Here's What Experts Say Could Help**

As the U.S. wades deeper into a brutal fall surge of the coronavirus, Americans are living under a growing list of restrictions aimed at curbing the exponential rise of COVID-19. But given the unrelenting advance of the virus, can these varied approaches make a difference? Or is it delaying the inevitable return to the sweeping lockdowns of the springtime? "It's really hard to slow it down once it gets going like this," says Don Milton, professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. "That's when these awful draconian measures come into play."

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/11/24/937178668/are-more-lockdowns-inevitable-or-can-other-measures-stop-the-surge>

### **Thanksgiving Travel Drops as Americans Rethink Rituals**

The leader of France says the country is past the peak of its second Covid-19 wave. A surge in California is shattering records. Pennsylvania bans alcohol sales past 5 p.m. on Wednesday, in a bid to stop pre-Thanksgiving partying.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/24/world/covid-19-coronavirus>

### **Lessons From Europe's Covid Surge: Control Is Fragile and Losing It Is Easy**

As Americans enter a period of peak travel among their states starting with Thanksgiving, new discoveries about how Europe's second coronavirus wave spread provide an object lesson. Many European regions had made such gains against Covid-19 as to be cited as models. Those gains proved fragile: Unanticipated pockets of infection on the continent and a rush to relax rules allowed it to surge across Europe again. Much of Europe's new wave can now be traced to outbreaks among agricultural workers living in cramped conditions in Spain's Catalonia and Aragón regions, according to researchers from Switzerland and Spain. It spread to nearby cities and across Spain, then home with tourists.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/europe-covid-surge-holiday-travel-11606238690>

### **Coronavirus surge: Is lockdown 'fatigue' to be blamed for the rise in cases?**

Delhi, which once successfully turned the tide over in COVID-19 is grappling with infection spikes again. The same has been witnessed in other cities across India. Unlike what many believe, the worst might not just be over yet. This, despite the fact that India as a country is witnessing a depleting peak of COVID. While authorities are imposing strict measures to safeguard the community, there have been significant lapses on the part of the public as well.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/coronavirus-surge-is-lockdown-fatigue-to-be-blamed-for-the-rise-in-cases/photostory/79402711.cms>

### **Winter cold, young spreaders, small gatherings spur South Korea's Covid-19 third wave**

Falling temperatures, young asymptomatic spreaders and small social gatherings where people tend to take off their masks. These are reasons cited by experts to explain South Korea's latest surge in coronavirus cases in what is viewed as the third major wave since February and possibly the biggest and toughest to curb. South Korea, which has prided itself on using massive testing and aggressive contact tracing to fight the coronavirus outbreak without resorting to lockdowns, is now struggling to contain Covid-19 ahead of an all-important college entrance exam due on Dec 3.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/winter-cold-young-spreaders-small-gatherings-spur-south-koreas-covid-19-third-wave>

### **Germany reports record COVID-19 deaths ahead of Christmas talks**

Germany reported a record 410 COVID-19 deaths in the last 24 hours, before the 16 federal state leaders and Chancellor Angela Merkel meet on Wednesday to discuss restrictions for the Christmas and New Year holidays. The number of confirmed coronavirus cases increased by 18,633 to 961,320, data from the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for infectious diseases showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-germany/germany-reports-record-covid-19-deaths-ahead-of-christ>

[mas-talks-idUSL8N2IB1A\]](#)

### **Global coronavirus cases surpass 60 million infections - Reuters tally**

The global tally of confirmed coronavirus cases hit 60 million on Wednesday, with the pace of new infections accelerating and the United States reporting record numbers of hospitalizations, according to a Reuters tally. The United States has reported 1 million new COVID-19 cases in less than a week, taking its total reported infections to over 12.5 million and its death toll to 260,000, according to the Reuters data based on official statements. Globally, infections stood at 60.005 million and deaths at 1.4 million.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-global-cases/global-coronavirus-cases-surpass-60-million-infections-reuters-tally-idUSKBN2852S8>

### **South Korea confirms most COVID-19 cases since March**

South Korea has reported almost 600 new cases of coronavirus – the highest in more than eight months – as the country scrambles to contain a third wave of infections despite months of stringent safety measures nationwide. The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said that “sporadic cluster infections across the country” from private gatherings, public facilities, hospitals and the military were behind most of the 583 new cases on Thursday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/26/south-korea-sees-record-number-of-covid-19-cases-in-eight-months>

### **US COVID-19 daily death toll tops 2,000 with many hospitals full**

Daily US deaths from COVID-19 surpassed 2,000 for the first time since May and with hospitals across the country already full, portending a surge in mortalities to come as the coronavirus pandemic casts a shadow over the holiday season. The death toll reached 2,100 on Tuesday, with another 200,000 people infected, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally, numbers that experts say could grow with millions of Americans defying official warnings and travelling for Thursday’s Thanksgiving holiday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/25/us-hits-highest-death-toll-since-may-with-hospitals-already-full>

### **Coronavirus Malaysia: Top Glove on defensive over treatment of foreign workers as infections spread**

Human resources minister M. Saravanan assails company for ‘terrible’ living conditions of workers and vows stern action. Company chairman dismisses possibility that its gloves could be contaminated as a result of the mass infections among work force

[https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3111380/coronavirus-malaysia-top-glove-defensive-over-treatment-foreign?utm\\_term=Autofeed&utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_content=article&utm\\_source=Twitter#Echobox=1606317427](https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3111380/coronavirus-malaysia-top-glove-defensive-over-treatment-foreign?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_content=article&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1606317427)

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Night curfews allowed, lockdown needs Centre’s nod in new Covid protocol**

In India, due to the rise in the number of Covid-19 cases in various states, the Centre on Wednesday allowed states and union territories to impose local restrictions, such as night curfew, based on their assessment of the situation. However, they cannot impose any local lockdown outside the containment zones without prior consultation with the Centre. The MHA also said that state governments can consider implementing staggered office timings and other suitable measures in cities where the weekly case positivity rate is more than 10 percent so that the number of employees attending offices at the same time can be reduced.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/states-can-order-night-curfews-but-no-lockdown-in-new-covid-guidelines/story-jbVfE70qQjC6ufgr6nQUK.html>

### **Bulgaria imposes lockdown as COVID-19 cases surge**

Bulgaria said on Wednesday it would close schools, restaurants, shopping malls and gyms until Dec.

21 as it struggles to contain a surge in new coronavirus infections. "Only one thing has been proven to have an impact on COVID-19 - decreasing social contacts or quarantine. To ease the pressure on hospitals that are on the brink, we are introducing measures for three weeks," Prime Minister Boyko Borissov said. Like much of central and eastern Europe, Bulgaria weathered the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic relatively well in the spring, but cases have spiked across the region this autumn.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-bulgaria-idUKKBN285170>