

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Five Minute Briefing

Coronavirus crisis unlikely to be over by the end of the year, WHO warns

- The WHO has said it is “unrealistic” [to expect the coronavirus pandemic will be over](#) by the end of 2021. “I think it will be very premature, and I think unrealistic, to think that we’re going to finish with this virus by the end of the year,” Michael Ryan, executive director of the WHO’s Health Emergencies Program, told a press conference
- “Basic public health measures remain the foundation of the response,” the director general of WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said
- He said while vaccines would help to save lives, “if countries rely solely on vaccines, they’re making a mistake”. “This is disappointing, but not surprising.”
- “We’re working to better understand these increases in transmission. Some of it appears to be due to relaxing of public health measures, continued circulation of variants, and people letting down their guard.”

Johnson & Johnson collaborates with Merck to manufacture more COVID-19 vaccine faster

With COVID vaccine maker pact, Biden vows wide vaccine access by May

Today President Joe Biden announced the partnership of two pharmaceutical giants—Johnson & Johnson and Merck—who will work together to increase the supply of Johnson & Johnson's single-dose COVID-19 vaccine, which received emergency use authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) this past weekend. "This is the type of collaboration we saw during World War II," Biden said today during a formal announcement of the partnership.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/03/covid-vaccine-maker-pact-biden-vows-wide-vaccine-access-may>

COVID-19: US aims to have enough vaccines for all adults 'by end of May', Biden says

The US will have enough COVID vaccines for all adults by the end of May, Joe Biden has said. But in a speech at the White House on Tuesday, the US president admitted the country is unlikely to get back to normal until this time next year. Mr Biden also directed states to make sure all teachers and school workers receive at least one dose by the end of March.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-us-aims-to-have-enough-vaccines-for-all-adults-by-end-of-may-biden-says-12234244>

The U.S. might be only a few weeks away from getting a fourth authorized coronavirus vaccine

Novavax CEO Says Its Coronavirus Vaccine Could Win FDA Approval in May

The U.S. might be only a few weeks away from getting a fourth authorized coronavirus vaccine. That, at least, is the opinion of Novavax CEO Stanley Erck. On Monday, Erck said that his company's NVX-CoV2373 vaccine candidate could be granted emergency use authorization (EUA) approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). That's conditional on the results of a phase 3 clinical trial involving 15,000 people in the U.K., the analysis of which should be completed in a matter of weeks.

<https://www.fool.com/investing/2021/03/01/novavax-ceo-says-its-coronavirus-vaccine-could-win/>

What to do about opening schools - vaccinate teachers

Biden moves to get all teachers a vaccine shot by the end of March

President Biden said Tuesday that he would use federal authority to offer coronavirus vaccinations to K-12 teachers and child care workers, with the aim of getting at least the first shot administered to all educators by the end of March. The goal is to remove one of the major barriers to reopening schools — an urgent step for parents and children alike — but one that has been enormously controversial and complicated. Teachers, who have resisted going back in many communities, have said that they would be much more willing to return to school buildings if they are vaccinated first.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/biden-teacher-vaccine-march-covid/2021/03/02/b4bdec9e-7ba3-11eb-a976-c028a4215c78_story.html

Covid-19: Regular tests a 'game-changer' for schools, says science adviser

Regular testing of secondary pupils will be a "game-changer" in giving confidence that schools are safe, a government science adviser has said. Prof Calum Semple told the BBC better ventilation and face masks would also contribute to a safe reopening in England from 8 March. Rates of infection in schools had been "quite low", he said. But a school leaders' union warned the testing demands may mean a staggered return for many. Secondary pupils in England will be asked to take a rapid lateral flow test twice a week to help identify anyone who might be infectious.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56250995>

COVID-19: Italy closes schools in 'red zone' coronavirus areas amid concerning growth in new variants

Italy's government has ordered the closure of all schools in regions hardest hit by the coronavirus amid rising fears over new variants of the disease. Italy was one of the first countries in Europe to see COVID-19 on a large scale in February 2020, and it has registered nearly three million confirmed cases since then. It is now seeing around 15,000 new cases per day and the trend is rising, putting the health system under strain.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-italy-closes-schools-in-red-zone-coronavirus-areas-amid-concerning-growth-in-new-variants-12234081>

Encouraging hope - restarting tourism

Vaccine passports could allow people back into Scots pubs, says government advisor

A system of vaccine passports could ultimately allow the return of international travel, MSPs have been told, while some countries are already requiring vaccination "green passes" for entertainment venues. Professor Devi Sridhar of Edinburgh University spoke to the Scottish Parliament's Health Committee about international travel regulations during the pandemic. The Scottish Government adviser said that if coronavirus vaccines significantly reduced transmission of the disease, as initial evidence suggested, electronic vaccine passports could help to restart international tourism. She said EU countries were already developing plans for a digital green pass, with countries like Spain and Greece keen to welcome visitors again. Prof Sridhar said: "I think if these vaccines stop transmission, which they look like they might, we will reach a stage of vaccine passports.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/vaccine-passports-scotland-pubs-coronavirus-23591795>

Lifting COVID-19 restrictions too soon?

Austria plans to let cafe and restaurant terraces reopen this month

Austria plans to let cafe and restaurant terraces reopen this month in a further loosening of its coronavirus lockdown that will get an early start in a small Alpine province because of its lower infection rate, the government said on Monday. Austria first loosened its third coronavirus lockdown three weeks ago despite stubbornly high infections, arguing that the economic, social and psychological effect of keeping all of its restrictions in place would have been too great. Non-essential shops, schools, hairdressers and museums are now open but restaurants, bars, hotels and theatres are not. Ski lifts have been open since Christmas Eve but with hotels closed they have

almost only been used by locals and day-trippers. A nighttime curfew has replaced all-day restrictions on movement.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-austria/austria-plans-to-let-cafe-and-restaurant-terraces-reopen-this-month-idUSL5N2KZ6TA>

Texas becomes biggest US state to lift COVID-19 mask mandate

Texas is lifting its mask mandate, Gov. Greg Abbott said Tuesday, making it the largest state to no longer require one of the most effective ways to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The announcement in Texas, where the virus has killed more than 43,000 people, rattled doctors and big city leaders who said they are now bracing for another deadly resurgence. One hospital executive in Houston said he told his staff they would need more personnel and ventilators. Federal health officials this week urgently warned states to not let their guard down, warning that the pandemic is far from over.

<https://apnews.com/article/texas-lifts-covid-19-mask-mandate-ed7cd1b065a1afd71175f255fb5148aa>

Two-dose vaccines - what are the pros and cons

COVID-19: Government's strategy of delaying second coronavirus vaccine dose further vindicated

Now we have the first robust data on the real world effectiveness of these vaccines. And it shows that both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines are highly effective in reducing COVID-19 infections among older people aged 70 and over. That means a reduction in hospital admissions and that means a reduction in the number of people dying of coronavirus.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-governments-strategy-of-delaying-second-coronavirus-vaccine-dose-further-vindicated-12233131>

Single Shot Of Coronavirus Vaccine After Illness Could Extend Supply : Shots - Health News

Public health officials say it's important to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible to reduce the risk posed by new coronavirus variants. One strategy to stretch existing supplies – albeit with huge logistical challenges — would be to give just one dose of the vaccine to people who have recovered from COVID-19. About half a dozen small studies, all consistent with one another but as yet unpublished, suggest this strategy could work. Dr. Mohammad Sajadi, at the University of Maryland medical school's Institute of Human Virology studied health care workers who were just getting their first of two vaccine shots. His research team homed in on those who had previously been diagnosed with COVID-19. "We saw a much faster response and a much higher response," he says, based on the protective antibodies his team measured in the blood. The infection served the same priming role as an initial dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine would have, so the first shot they got was in effect a booster. It amplified and solidified immunity to COVID-19. The study was published Monday in JAMA, the journal of the American Medical Association.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/03/01/972563440/could-a-single-dose-of-covid-19-vaccine-after-illness-stretch-the-supply>

Why Second Doses Of Covid-19 Coronavirus Vaccines May Have More Side Effects

Some people have reported experiencing more side effects when getting their second doses of the Moderna or Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine compared to when they got their first doses. For example, the COVID Symptom Study website states that “after effects are more common the second time around, with around one in five who received their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine logging at least one systemic effect.” Indeed, a December 31, 2020, publication in the New England Journal of Medicine had indicated that in the Phase 3 clinical trial of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, side effects that involved more than just the injection site were reported “more often after dose 2 than dose 1.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brucelee/2021/03/02/why-second-doses-of-covid-19-coronavirus-vaccines-may-have-more>

[re-side-effects/](#)

Pfizer, AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines may offer high efficacy in elderly

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Both the Pfizer/BioNTech and AstraZeneca/Oxford University COVID-19 vaccines significantly reduce severe illness, hospitalization, and death in older adults and offer protection against the B.1.1.7 variant, suggests a real-world, observational, non-peer-reviewed study from the United Kingdom. The study, led by researchers from Public Health England (PHE) and published yesterday on a preprint server, compared the rate of vaccination in symptomatic people older than 70 who tested positive for coronavirus with that of those who weren't vaccinated from Dec 8, 2020, to Feb 19, 2021. A total of 44,590 participants with available vaccination data tested positive for COVID-19, while 112,340 tested negative.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/03/pfizer-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccines-may-offer-high-efficacy-elderly>

Vaccine hesitancy takes many forms

Ukraine throws away unused COVID-19 shots as doctors skip their own vaccinations

Ukrainian medical facilities have thrown away some unused COVID-19 vaccines after doctors failed to show up for their own appointments to be vaccinated, ruling party lawmakers said on Monday. Ukraine has just begun vaccinating its 41 million people against COVID-19 after receiving a first batch of 500,000 doses of Indian-made AstraZeneca shots last week, but faces a battle against vaccine scepticism that predates the pandemic. The government has prioritised giving shots to frontline medical workers but cited statistics showing that 47% of Ukrainians do not want the vaccine.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-ukraine/ukraine-throws-away-unused-covid-19-shots-as-doctors-skip-their-own-vaccinations-idUKKCN2AT2EY>

A third of all military personnel are refusing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine

A third of all military personnel in the U.S. are refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine, and in some units just 30% of enlistees are willing to have a shot, according to a new report. The figure is alarming commanders as the coronavirus pandemic continues to rage across the United States. Personnel who refuse the vaccine will face no repercussions due to a federal law that 'prohibits the mandatory application of medicines within the military that are not fully licensed by the US Food and Drug Administration', The Nation reports.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9316827/A-military-personnel-refusing-receive-COVID-19-vaccine.html>

COVID-19: Twitter expands 'warning labels' to target misleading vaccine posts

Twitter is expanding its use of warning labels, targeting tweets that contain misleading details about coronavirus vaccines. The decision has been made to strengthen the social network's existing COVID-19 guidance, which has led to the removal of more than 8,400 tweets and challenged 11.5 million accounts worldwide. Labels providing additional context are already attached to tweets with disputed information about the pandemic. However, this is the first time the firm has focused on posts about vaccines specifically. Twitter said it is starting a strike system that "determines when further enforcement action is necessary".

<https://news.sky.com/story/twitter-expands-warning-labels-to-target-misleading-covid-vaccine-posts-12233116>

Brazilian states blast Bolsonaro over pandemic during worst phase yet

Disgruntled with President Jair Bolsonaro's handling of a pandemic in its most severe phase, 16 Brazilian governors accused the far-right leader of misleading the country and state authorities urged a nationwide curfew and closure of airports. A year after Brazil's COVID-19 outbreak began, it has killed over 255,000 Brazilians and yet little more than 3% of the 210 million population has been

vaccinated, raising criticism of Bolsonaro for failing to secure timely supplies of vaccines. Last week was the deadliest yet for Brazil's outbreak, averaging nearly 1,200 confirmed deaths per day according to Health Ministry data. Intensive care units in the country's main cities have reached critical occupancy levels not seen since the first peak of the pandemic last July.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-brazil/brazilian-states-blast-bolsonaro-over-pandemic-during-worst-phase-yet-idUSL2N2KZ1SO>

British South Asians suffer heavy toll as coronavirus surges

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In the UK, more than 135,000 people have passed away with COVID-19 on their death certificates since the start of the pandemic. Britain's ethnic minorities, particularly those of Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean or Pakistani origin, have been disproportionately affected in terms of exposure to the virus - with some communities witnessing far higher rates of hospitalisation and deaths. In August last year, Public Health England found that in the first wave, people of Bangladeshi descent were twice as likely to die from COVID-19 than white Britons, while people of Indian and Pakistani origin were between 10 and 50 percent more likely to die. According to a February report by the Office for National Statistics, "There was a reduction of COVID-19 mortality during the second wave of the pandemic in most of the ethnic groups, while the higher rates continued in men and women from Bangladeshi and Pakistani background."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/3/2/in-the-uk-muslims-funeral-customs-have-been-upended-by-covid>