

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 20th Apr 2021

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### Overnight NewsRoundup

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#### **There's a new COVID-19 variant in India. How worried should we be?**

- The new variant, which has a so-called double mutation, is thought to be fuelling India's deadlier new wave of cases that has made it the world's second worst hit country, surpassing Brazil again, and has already begun to [overwhelm its hospitals and crematoriums](#). India has reported 14.5 million COVID-19 cases so far and more than 175,600 fatalities.
- 'This is a variant of interest we are following,' Maria van Kerkhove, the World Health Organization's technical lead on COVID-19 told reporters. 'Having two of these mutations, which have been seen in other variants around the world, is concerning,' she added, going on to say that ['there was a similarity with mutations that increase transmission as well as reduce neutralization, 'possibly' stunting the ability of vaccines to curb them.'](#)
- The new strain underscores the insidious nature of viruses and threatens to thwart containment efforts in India, despite measures such as the world's largest lockdown last year. An exploding outbreak in India risks undoing a hard won victory over the pathogen for others as this strain has now jumped to at least 10 other countries.

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<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2021/04/19/asia-pacific/india-coronavirus-variant/>

#### **Non-stop cremations cast doubt on India's counting of COVID dead**

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Gas and firewood furnaces at a crematorium in the western Indian state of Gujarat have been running so long without a break during the COVID-19 pandemic that metal parts have begun to melt. "We are working around the clock at 100% capacity to cremate bodies on time," Kamlesh Sailor, the president of the trust that runs the crematorium in the diamond-polishing city of Surat, told Reuters. And with hospitals full and oxygen and medicines in short supply in an already creaky health system, several major cities are reporting far larger numbers of cremations and burials under coronavirus protocols than official COVID-19 death tolls, according to crematorium and cemetery workers, media and a review of government data.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/non-stop-cremations-cast-doubt-indias-counting-covid-dead-2021-04-19/>

#### **India's capital to lock down amid explosive virus surge**

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New Delhi imposed a weeklong lockdown Monday night to prevent the collapse of the Indian capital's health system, which authorities said had been pushed to its limit amid an explosive surge

in coronavirus cases. In scenes familiar from surges elsewhere, ambulances catapulted from one hospital to another, trying to find an empty bed over the weekend, while patients lined up outside of medical facilities waiting to be let in. Ambulances also idled outside of crematoriums, carrying half a dozen dead bodies each. In an effort to combat crisis, India announced that it would soon expand its vaccination campaign to all adults. "People keep arriving, in an almost collapsing situation," said Dr. Suresh Kumar, who heads Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, one of New Delhi's largest hospitals for treating COVID-19 patients.

<https://apnews.com/article/india-new-delhi-coronavirus-lockdown-surge-194b8356811dadf41c552beedff839a9>

### **India's Delhi to lock down for six days as COVID-19 outbreak worsens**

The Indian capital New Delhi will be under a strict lockdown for six days starting on Monday night, the city's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, adding the healthcare system was at a breaking point because of the worsening COVID-19 outbreak. The city was also facing acute shortages of hospital beds, medical oxygen supplies and key medicines such as the anti-viral Remdesivir, Kejriwal said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-delhi-lock-down-six-days-covid-19-outbreak-worsens-2021-04-19/>

### **Is a double mutant COVID variant behind India's record surge?**

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#### **Is a double mutant COVID variant behind India's record surge?**

With India's daily tally of Covid-19 infections surging by records, public health experts worry that a new – possibly more virulent – coronavirus variant could be racing through the crowded nation of more than 1.3 billion people. The new variant, which has a so-called double mutation, is thought to be fueling India's deadlier new wave of cases that has made it the world's second worst-hit country, surpassing Brazil again, and has already begun to overwhelm its hospitals and crematoriums. India has reported more than 14.5 million Covid cases so far and more than 175,600 fatalities.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/19/is-a-double-mutant-covid-variant-behind-indias-record-surge>

### **Covid-19: How India failed to prevent a deadly second wave**

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#### **Covid-19: How India failed to prevent a deadly second wave**

India is now in the grips of a public health emergency. Social media feeds are full with videos of Covid funerals at crowded cemeteries, wailing relatives of the dead outside hospitals, long queues of ambulances carrying gasping patients, mortuaries overflowing with the dead, and patients, sometimes two to a bed, in corridors and lobbies of hospitals. There are frantic calls for help for beds, medicines, oxygen, essential drugs and tests. Drugs are being sold on the black market, and test results are taking days. "They didn't tell me for three hours that my child is dead," a dazed mother says in one video, sitting outside an ICU. Experts believe the government appears to have completely dropped the ball on the second wave of infections that was about to hit India.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-56771766>

### **India to waive import duty on COVID-19 vaccines, says govt source**

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India will waive its 10% customs duty on imported COVID-19 vaccines, a senior government official told Reuters on Monday, as it tries to boost supplies to counter a dramatic surge in coronavirus cases. Imports of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine are due to arrive soon and the government has also urged Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson and Johnson to sell their products to India. The official, who declined to be named, also said the government was considering allowing private entities to import approved vaccines for sale on the open market without government intervention. They could also be given the freedom to set pricing, he added.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-waive-import-duty-covid-19-vaccines-says-govt-source-2021-04-19/>

### **Covid-19: At current vaccination pace, India won't reach 70% coverage until year-end**

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#### **Covid-19: At current vaccination pace, India won't reach 70% coverage until year-end**

The hype around tika utsav failed to lift India's vaccination drive last week. Amid complaints of vaccine shortage and rising infections, herd immunity seems far away, calculations show. The four-day 'tika utsav', or 'vaccine festival', came to an end on 14 April amidst fast-rising covid-19 cases. Despite the hype, India's vaccinations slowed down in this period compared to the previous week. If the recent pace continues, India won't reach 70% vaccine coverage until December 2021, a Mint analysis shows.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/covid19-at-current-vaccination-pace-india-won-t-reach-70-coverage-until-year-end-11618797627025.html>

## **India to allow COVID-19 vaccines for all adults as cases surge**

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### **India to allow COVID-19 vaccines for all adults as cases surge**

India will let all citizens over 18 have COVID-19 vaccinations from May 1, the government said on Monday, as the health system creaked under the weight of record-high cases and the capital region of New Delhi ordered a lockdown. Facing growing criticism over its handling of the second wave of the pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration said vaccine manufacturers would have to supply 50% of doses to the federal government and the rest to state governments and the open market at a pre-declared price.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-daily-covid-19-cases-rise-by-record-273810-2021-04-19/>

## **Loosening Travel Restrictions**

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### **The exotic holiday hotspot offering coronavirus vaccinations to visitors amid a slow vaccine rollout in Australia**

It was one of the first countries to fully reopen to travellers, and now the Maldives is striving to get ahead of the game when it comes to vaccine tourism. As Australia grapples with a slow COVID-19 vaccination rollout, the small archipelagic state in South Asia has launched an inventive invitation to potential visitors. Officials for the Indian Ocean destination have announced plans to offer coronavirus vaccinations to tourists on arrival in a bid to lure more tourists over. Dr Abdulla Mausoom, the country's minister for tourism, has confirmed that the Maldives is developing a "3V tourism" scheme, which would allow tourists to "Visit, Vaccinate and Vacation."

<https://7news.com.au/travel/the-exotic-holiday-hotspot-offering-coronavirus-vaccinations-to-visitors-amid-a-slow-vaccine-rollout-in-australia-c-2630197>

### **Greece opens to tourists, anxious to move on from crisis season**

Greece began opening to tourists on Monday with few bookings but hopes for a better season to help make up for a 2020 devastated by the coronavirus pandemic. On Rhodes island, where most visitors are from abroad, hoteliers are scrubbing, polishing and painting in anticipation of a make-or-break year. "We're preparing the hotel in order to start as soon as the government gives us the green light," said George Tselios, general manager of Sun Beach Hotel, whose customers are from Scandinavia, Germany, Austria and Britain. Greece will formally open on May 14 but starting Monday, tourists from the European Union, the United States, Britain, Serbia, Israel and the United Arab Emirates will not quarantine if they are vaccinated or test negative for COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/greece-opens-tourists-anxious-move-crisis-season-2021-04-19/>

### **COVID-19: Families reunite as travel bubble between Australia and New Zealand opens**

Families and friends have been able to reunite after a long-anticipated travel bubble between Australia and New Zealand opened. The start of quarantine-free travel was a relief for families who have been separated by the coronavirus pandemic as well as struggling tourist operators. It marked the first, tentative steps towards what both countries hope will become a gradual reopening to the rest of the world

<https://news.sky.com/story/families-reunite-as-travel-bubble-between-australia-and-new-zealand-opens-12279975>

## **US warns against travel to 80% of world due to coronavirus**

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The State Department on Monday urged Americans reconsider any international travel they may have planned and said it would issue specific warnings not to visit roughly 80% of the world's countries due to risks from the coronavirus pandemic. The United States hasn't had a global advisory warning against international travel since August, when guidance was revoked by the Trump administration. The advice issued by the department isn't a formal global advisory. Instead, it says the State Department will start using Centers for Disease Control and Prevention standards as it prepares health and safety guidelines for individual countries. Because of those standards, about 80% of countries will be classified as "Level 4" or "do not travel."

<https://apnews.com/article/politics-travel-health-coronavirus-pandemic-united-states-971007b4f02b53f3d44a1dd8b27d9228>

## **Places slipping back into COVID-19 crisis**

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### **'We've cried ourselves dry': COVID overwhelms Manila hospitals**

For Gio Pineda, a young doctor in the Philippines capital of Manila, the past few days have been among the most harrowing of his life. Pineda has been manning the triage section of his hospital's COVID-19 emergency unit. With the more than 40 beds occupied by patients in critical condition, and the hallway lined with more patients in wheelchairs, Pineda had to decide who would get treatment and who would not. He turned away more than half the people who came begging him to take in an ailing loved one, many of them struggling to breathe. Some even knelt in front of him, begging to at least be allowed to wait in the hallway. "Many of them said we were already the eighth or ninth hospital they tried, and if it were up to me, I really would have taken them in," he said. "But there really was no room left."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/19/for-kate-patients-die-as-covid-overwhelms-philippine-hospitals>

### **Ontario's COVID crisis: 'This scenario was entirely preventable'**

Dr Naheed Dosani says healthcare workers in Ontario are angry. Working tirelessly amid a recent surge of COVID-19 infections, which have quickly filled up intensive care units across the Canadian province, hospital staff are "dealing with immense trauma (and) moral injury" as they treat scores of coronavirus patients, said Dosani. But what makes it even more difficult, the Toronto-based palliative care physician and health justice activist told Al Jazeera, is watching the Ontario government put measures in place that he says will not do enough to get the pandemic under control. "This entire humanitarian catastrophe should never have happened. Had the Ontario government just listened to the experts and made the important decisions ... around public health restrictions, we would never have been here," Dosani said. "This whole scenario was entirely preventable."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/18/ontario-covid-crisis-this-was-entirely-preventable>

### **Argentina receives AstraZeneca jabs amid anti-lockdown protests**

Argentina has received a shipment of 864,000 AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX global vaccination programme, the government said on Sunday, a day after demonstrations broke out against lockdown measures imposed in the Buenos Aires area. The doses from the Netherlands come after Argentina received 218,000 jabs last month through COVAX, which aims to ensure lower-income nations have equitable access to much-needed vaccines. The South American country has administered 6.2 million jabs since its vaccine roll-out began in December of last year, while around 800,000 people are considered fully immunised after receiving two doses. Argentines took to the streets on Saturday, however, to protest against new coronavirus-related restrictions in and around the capital, Buenos Aires, that came into effect on Friday. The new measures, which include an 8pm curfew, school closures and a ban on activities in indoor public spaces, are expected to last through

the end of the month.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/18/argentina-receives-astrazeneca-jabs-amid-anti-lockdown-protests>

### **Bangladesh extends coronavirus lockdown for another week**

Bangladesh has decided to extend the nationwide lockdown for yet another week to counter the spike in coronavirus infections, an official said on Monday. "The restrictions will continue for one more week from Thursday," the government's Chief Information Officer Surodh Kumar Sarker told reporters, referring to a senior officials' meeting that reviewed the latest COVID-19 situation. Given the surge in new infections and deaths from the virus, the government on April 5 enforced a nine-day lockdown shutting offices, shopping malls and transport across Bangladesh. The shutdown was then extended until Wednesday as the situation worsened. Bangladesh saw the highest single-day increase in infections on April 9, with 7,462 new cases, and the highest daily death toll, 102, on Sunday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/19/bangladesh-extends-coronavirus-lockdown-for-another-week>

### **Number of COVID-19 patients in French intensive care edges up**

The number of coronavirus patients in intensive care units in France edged up on Sunday, the health ministry said, amid a nationwide lockdown to try to stem a third wave of infections. Health ministry data showed that 5,893 people were in intensive care units with COVID-19, 16 more than on Saturday. The number of COVID-19 patients in hospital rose by 460 to 30,789, ending a streak of five consecutive daily falls. A government spokesman has said there are signs that the pressure on the medical system is easing slightly, but that the situation in hospitals remains serious. France is hoping an acceleration of its vaccination campaign, combined with the month-long nationwide lockdown in place since last weekend, will help it regain control over the outbreak.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/number-covid-19-patients-french-intensive-care-edges-up-2021-04-18/>

### **Bitter experience helps French ICUs crest latest virus wave**

While mechanical ventilation is unavoidable for some covid-19 patients, it's a step taken less systematically now than at the start of the pandemic. The shift to less-invasive breathing treatments also is helping French ICUs stave off collapse under a renewed crush of coronavirus cases. Supercharged by a more contagious virus variant that first ravaged neighboring Britain, the third infection wave in France has pushed the country's COVID-19-related death toll past 100,000 people. Hospitals across the country are grappling again with the macabre mathematics of making space for thousands of critically sick patients.

<https://apnews.com/article/france-icu-coronavirus-surge-c47d52a99b97302bd1ef80195d723fe2>

### **Ontario faces more vaccine delays as it struggles to tame third COVID-19 wave**

Ontario Premier Doug Ford said on Monday the province expects to face a delay in the supply of AstraZeneca Plc COVID-19 vaccine, dealing another blow to its efforts to contain a punishing third wave of the pandemic. "In addition to the delayed and cut Moderna shipments, the Premier was notified today by our officials to be prepared for delays to two shipments of AstraZeneca expected from the federal government later this month and next," a statement from Ford's office said. Canada's most-populous province said on Sunday it would lower the minimum age for recipients of the AstraZeneca vaccine to 40 from 55

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/ontario-faces-more-vaccine-delays-it-struggles-tame-third-covid-19-wave-2021-04-19/>

### **Thai COVID-19 infections ease after days of record highs**

Thailand reported 1,390 new coronavirus cases on Monday, slowing slightly after a run of record daily highs, amid a new wave of infections that has seen a third of the country's cases recorded this month alone. The new infections were down by a fifth from Sunday's record 1,767 cases, which the coronavirus taskforce said was due to measures to control the spread and requests for people to

avoid travel and gatherings. Thailand's third wave of infections is its most challenging so far, reaching all 77 of its provinces as the country celebrated a long holiday. The infections include the highly-transmissible B.1.1.7 variant of the virus and the majority of cases have been without symptoms.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thai-covid-19-infections-ease-after-days-record-highs-2021-04-19/>

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### **Denmark may allow people to choose the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine despite ceasing rollout**

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Denmark may allow people to choose the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine despite the country ceasing its rollout, it has been reported. The move, reported by Ritzau news agency, comes after Denmark became the first country to stop using AstraZeneca's vaccine altogether over a potential link to a rare but serious form of blood clot. The decision pushed back the scheduled conclusion of Denmark's vaccination scheme to early August from July 25.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/denmark-may-allow-people-to-choose-the-astrazeneca-covid19-vaccine-b930440.html>

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### **Canada confirms second blood clot case linked to AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine, but it will be used to battle third wave**

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Canada has reported a second case of rare blood clots linked to the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in a week, but health authorities continue to recommend the use of the shot. The person who experienced the very rare event has been treated and is recovering, Canada's health ministry said in a statement. Based on the evidence available, Canada still maintains that the benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine outweigh the potential risks, the statement said.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-04-19/canada-confirms-second-blood-clot-case-linked-to-astrazeneca/100079094>

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### **Nearly all children will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccines by the first quarter of 2022, Fauci says**

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Dr Anthony Fauci said he believes that nearly all children in the U.S. will be able to receive COVID-19 vaccines by 2022. He added that he thinks vaccines will be available earlier for high schoolers, who may be able to be vaccinated before the new school year. Multiple vaccine manufacturers are running clinical trials on children including Pfizer and Moderna. Ten days ago, Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech asked the FDA to expand emergency use authorization of their vaccine to 12-to-15 year olds. Nearly 40% of the population has received at least one dose with more than three million shots being put in arms every day

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9487317/Nearly-children-eligible-COVID-19-vaccines-quarter-2022-Fauci-says.html>

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### **More Women Are Getting The Coronavirus Vaccine Than Men**

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Kaiser Health News reporter Laura Ungar tells NPR's Lulu Garcia-Navarro about the gender gap in American vaccinations programme

<https://www.npr.org/2021/04/18/988483542/more-women-are-getting-the-coronavirus-vaccine-than-men>

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### **White House expands federal vaccine programs, taking more control of coronavirus vaccination efforts**

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## **vaccination efforts**

The Biden administration has ramped up its role in distributing and administering coronavirus vaccines, boosting federal pipelines in recent months with more doses and more vaccination sites in preparation for mounting US supply and the next phase of the US vaccination campaign. As the US officially entered that phase on Monday -- with every person 16 years and older now eligible to be vaccinated -- Biden administration officials said they estimate that 90% of Americans now live within five miles of a vaccination site as a result of the expanded federal channels. Nearly 40,000 pharmacies are now equipped to put shots in arms through a direct-to-pharmacy federal vaccine program, up from just a few thousand when the program launched two months ago.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/19/politics/covid-vaccine-federal-program-expanding/index.html>

## **Fifth of adults fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as UK hits 10m second dose milestone**

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The UK passed the milestone of 10m second doses on 18 April - meaning nearly one in five of all UK adults have now received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Government figures show that by the end of Saturday 17 April, 9,930,846 people UK-wide had received two doses of vaccine. More than 350,000 second doses were delivered per day on average over the week to 17 April - and the daily total has dropped below 200,000 just once in the past 12 days - suggesting that the 10m mark was passed over the weekend.

<https://www.gponline.com/fifth-adults-fully-vaccinated-against-covid-19-uk-hits-10m-second-dose-milestone/article/1713264>

## **Greta Thunberg joins fight for coronavirus vaccine equity**

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Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg has urged governments, vaccine developers and the world to “step up their game” to fight vaccine inequity after the richest countries snatched up most COVID-19 vaccine doses and those in poorer nations have gone lacking. Her comments on Monday came as the World Health Organization announced 5.2 million new confirmed virus cases during the latest week, the largest weekly count yet, according to the UN health agency.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/19/greta-thunberg-joins-fight-against-vaccine-inequity>

## **A jab on the job: Companies, unions offer COVID-19 vaccines**

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Marie Watson wanted to be among the first in line when she and other essential workers became eligible for the coronavirus vaccine — and with good reason. The maintenance parts buyer for a Mission Foods tortilla plant in Pueblo, Colorado, had lost her father to COVID-19 in the fall and was told by a doctor last year that she herself almost certainly had the virus. So when her union, the United Food Workers and Commercial Workers, secured appointments for the plant’s 200 workers, she jumped in her car and drove to a nearby drive-thru clinic for the first of two doses. “There was this sense of relief,” Watson said. “This was more confirmation that I’m on my way to being normal.”

<https://apnews.com/article/us-news-coronavirus-pandemic-colorado-labor-unions-e0f1d6ec967eaa9ab180f5b0f1c74b51>

## **Johnson & Johnson said blood clots have been reported with all Covid-19 vaccines. The author of the study they cited says they're wrong.**

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When news broke that Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine might be linked to blood clots, the company responded by pointing a finger at Pfizer and Moderna's vaccines, issuing a media statement that said a study showed there were reports of blood clots with their vaccines as well. But

the study doesn't show that at all, according to the lead author. "We didn't find anyone with blood clots," Dr. Eun-Ju Lee, an assistant professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College, said of her study of Moderna and Pfizer's vaccines. "We didn't find any of those scary things that are happening with Johnson & Johnson."

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/04/19/health/johnson-vaccine-blood-clots-statement/index.html>

## **The global impact of pausing the Johnson & Johnson**

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Governments around the world were struggling to prop up already sluggish immunization drives when troubling news of very rare side effects in patients vaccinated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine emerged.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/world/the-global-impact-of-pausing-the-johnson-johnson-vaccine/2021/04/19/7b7a98a8-f711-4e02-ba28-15ce6fb2b1db\\_video.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/world/the-global-impact-of-pausing-the-johnson-johnson-vaccine/2021/04/19/7b7a98a8-f711-4e02-ba28-15ce6fb2b1db_video.html)

## **COVID variants are hitting US young hard**

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The pediatrician told Melissa Zajacz of Medina, Ohio, that her 13-year-old son, Spencer, would be back to school in two weeks after he was diagnosed with Covid-19. Then came more trips to the doctor, fevers over 104 degrees and two visits to the Cleveland Clinic emergency room. Spencer's case, involving the B.1.1.7. variant, has kept him mostly bedridden and suffering headaches and swollen ankles since March 17. "There is no cure, so they offer support care," said Melissa Zajacz. "He hasn't been to school in a month. He's a healthy, athletic kid, and he's miserable."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/4/19/covid-variants-are-hitting-us-young-hard>

## **Volunteers to be reinfected with Covid-19 to help improve vaccines**

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### **Volunteers to be reinfected with Covid-19 to help improve vaccines**

Volunteers who have recovered from a coronavirus infection will be deliberately infected with the virus for a second time, in a new study which could help develop new treatments and vaccines against the disease. The study, led by a team from the University of Oxford, will investigate how a previous infection affects a second exposure to the virus and what kind of immune response is needed to protect people. It is known that some Covid-19 survivors have gone on to become reinfected at a later stage, and as variants of the virus emerge with new mutations the risk to the success of vaccines and natural protection could be significant.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/coronavirus-vaccine-reinfect-covid-study-b1833337.html>