

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

22nd Jul 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

More than 1.5 million children around the world lost a parent, grandparent or caregiver due to COVID-19, study finds

- A new study estimates that 1.5 million children worldwide have experienced the death of a parent, grandparent or primary caregiver due to COVID-19. Researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Imperial College London looked at mortality data and fertility statistics from 21 countries, spanning March 2020 through April 2021.
- [They found that more than one million children lost one or both parents, and another half a million children lost their primary caregivers.](#)
- In the U.S. alone, more than 110,000 children lost their parents or caregivers.
- [The researchers say that support is urgently needed for these children because orphaned youngsters face higher risks to their health, safety and wellbeing.](#)
- 'Out of control COVID-19 epidemics abruptly and permanently alter the lives of the children who are left behind,' said Dr Seth Flaxman, one of the study authors from Imperial College London.
- Compared to adults, children are less likely to have a severe case of COVID-19 and die from the disease. But this lower risk obscures a terrible impact that the pandemic has had on kids.
- With more than four million deaths worldwide, many children have lost their parents, grandparents, and other important adults in their lives to the virus.
- Orphanhood - defined by the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund as the loss of one or both parents - can put children at great risk.
- Orphaned children are more likely to face mental health issues, poverty and physical, emotional and sexual violence. They may also develop chronic conditions and are at higher risk for HIV/AIDS and other diseases.
- Children who lose a primary caregiver who isn't their parent - such as a grandparent or another relative - are similarly at risk.

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<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9807627/More-1-5-MILLION-children-world-lost-caregiver-COVID-19-study-finds.html>

COVID-19 variants develop better lock-picking skills to invade human cells

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Like expert lock pickers, COVID-19 variants may be more adept at breaking into and infecting

human cells, according to new research conducted by FIU physicists. The variants are able to do this by flexing a spike protein that works like a lock pick, unlocking and slipping into a cell for infection. The better the virus can manipulate the spike protein, the easier time it has accessing the cell and eventually spreading in an unvaccinated population.

<https://phys.org/news/2021-07-covid-variants-lock-picking-skills-invade.html>

New York requiring vaccine or testing for workers in city hospitals, clinics

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New York City will be requiring public health employees to get the coronavirus vaccine or undergo weekly COVID-19 testing. Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) is expected to announce the new policy on Wednesday. It will affect the more than 42,000 people who work for the public hospital system in the city, the mayor's spokesperson said on Tuesday, The New York Times reported. The policy will apply to the 10 percent of city government workers who work in the 11 hospitals in the public hospital system.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/564054-new-york-requiring-vaccine-or-testing-for-workers-in-city-hospitals-clinics>

COVID-19: 100,000 will die of coronavirus globally between now and end of the Olympics, WHO chief predicts

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More than 100,000 people will die from COVID-19 around the world between now and the end of the Olympic Games, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) has predicted. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a meeting of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Tokyo that "the pandemic is a test and the world is failing". He also warned that anyone who thinks the pandemic is over because cases are under control in their country is living in "a fool's paradise".

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-100-000-will-die-of-coronavirus-globally-between-now-and-the-end-of-the-olympics-who-chief-predicts-12360199>

Schools confront more polarization with mask rules for fall

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Students in Wichita, Kansas, public schools can ditch the masks when classes begin. Detroit public schools will probably require them unless everyone in a room is vaccinated. In Pittsburgh, masks will likely be required regardless of vaccination status. And in some states, schools cannot mandate face coverings under any circumstances. With COVID-19 cases soaring nationwide, school districts across the U.S. are yet again confronting the realities of a polarized country and the lingering pandemic as they navigate mask requirements, vaccine rules and social distancing requirements for the fast-approaching new school year.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-coronavirus-pandemic-92f4414ff2b85f98c59aa2a412b1cdcd>

No health pass, no cinema or museum: France tightens COVID-19 rules

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Health pass needed for cinemas, museums from July 21. To be extended to restaurants, bars, some travel from Aug. PM says most new infections are among non-vaccinated. Regions have powers to impose tougher measures if needed Introduction of health pass triggers protests

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/no-health-pass-no-cinema-or-museum-france-tightens-covid-19-rules-2021-07-21/>

My uncle died of Covid-19 before he could get a vaccine in Kenya, and I got mine in a US drugstore. This is what vaccine inequality looks like

My uncle died of Covid-19 before he could get a vaccine in Kenya, and I got mine in a US

drugstore. This is what vaccine inequality looks like

Every time I see a call from home, my heart sinks. I always fear that they're ringing to say that my grandmother has died. She has been on a ventilator for four weeks and my anxiety is near breaking point. The dreaded call could come at any time: Covid-19. Again. Even at 96, my Kenyan grandmother was among hundreds of millions in the developing world who was not vaccinated until recently because rich nations have hoarded most of the available shots. Though I'm more than 60 years younger than her, I was fully inoculated by April because I was living in the United States, where anybody over 12 can get a vaccine if they want one.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/21/africa/larry-madowo-global-vaccine-inequity-intl-cmd/index.html>

States are sitting on millions of surplus Covid-19 vaccine doses

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Millions of unused Covid-19 vaccines are set to go to waste as demand dwindles across the United States and doses likely expire this summer, according to public health officials. Several state health departments told STAT they have repeatedly asked the federal government to redistribute their supply to other countries, many of which are facing a third wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Officials in Washington have rejected those requests, citing legal and logistical challenges. "We're drowning in this stuff," said Robert Ator, a retired colonel in the Arkansas Air National Guard who is leading that state's Covid-19 vaccine distribution drive. "It's starting to get a bit silly and we want to make sure we're being good stewards."

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/07/20/states-are-sitting-on-millions-of-surplus-covid-19-vaccine-doses-as-expiration-dates-approach/>

Pfizer to offer COVID-19 vaccines to African Union through South African partnership

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Pfizer and BioNTech will partner with The Biovac Institute, a South African biopharmaceutical company, to manufacture COVID vaccines for distribution within the African Union, the companies announced Tuesday.

<https://www.yahoo.com/now/pfizer-offer-covid-19-vaccines-111512565.html>

Fauci, Paul clash on virus origins, trade charges of lying

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Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, angrily confronted Kentucky GOP Sen. Rand Paul on Tuesday in testimony on Capitol Hill, rejecting Paul's insinuation that the U.S. helped fund research at a Chinese lab that could have sparked the COVID-19 outbreak. Paul suggested that Fauci had lied before Congress when in May he denied that the National Institutes of Health funded so-called "gain of function" research — the practice of enhancing a virus in a lab to study its potential impact in the real world — at a Wuhan virology lab. U.S. intelligence agencies are currently exploring theories that an accidental leak from that lab could have led to the global pandemic.

<https://apnews.com/article/science-health-government-and-politics-coronavirus-pandemic-ec75a3b9505409e12aa6f65d3170ad26>

Covid: The Mexican villages refusing to vaccinate

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In November Pascuala Vázquez Aguilar had a strange dream about her village Coquilteel, nestled among the trees in the mountains of southern Mexico. A plague had come to the village and everyone ran to the forest. They hid in a hut under a tall canopy of oak trees. "The plague couldn't reach us there," Pascuala says. "That's what I saw in my dream." A few months later the pandemic had engulfed Mexico and thousands of people were dying every week. But Coquilteel and many small, indigenous towns in the state of Chiapas were left relatively unscathed. This has been a

blessing but it also presents a problem.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-57893466>

COVID Vaccines And Infertility? How Misinformation Spreads In 6 Steps : Shots - Health News

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Misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines can appear almost anywhere: from an uncle's Facebook post to a well-trusted news commentator. But where does it come from, and why do some myths spread further than others? With the help of the internet research firm Graphika, NPR analyzed the rise of one persistent set of lies about COVID-19 vaccines: that they can affect female fertility. Despite a mountain of scientific evidence showing the vaccines are safe and effective, the false information persists.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/07/20/1016912079/the-life-cycle-of-a-covid-19-vaccine-lie>

White House has held discussions with Fox News over its Covid-19 coverage

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The White House is trying to fix the problem of slowing Covid-19 vaccinations by engaging with an unlikely source: Fox News. The network, which Fox Corp. CEO Lachlan Murdoch has called the "loyal opposition" to President Joe Biden's White House, has been a hub for vaccine hesitancy and outright hostility. As the pandemic has gone on, and Covid-19 vaccinations have slowed, vaccine resistance among Republicans -- the Fox News audience base -- has been a recurring theme, leading many observers to scrutinize Fox's coverage.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/20/politics/white-house-fox-news-vaccines/index.html>

More Than 200 Facebook Groups Have Been Actively Circulating Coronavirus Vaccine Misinformation

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After President Biden came down hard on Facebook last week over coronavirus vaccine misinformation, the company responded with almost equal force, insisting in no uncertain terms that it wasn't responsible for how that type of content has spread on the web. But new research released Tuesday suggests Facebook does indeed remain a place where such misinformation is circulating: Media Matters for America, a liberal tech watchdog organization, says it has found 284 active private and public Facebook Groups currently distributing vaccine misinformation, more than double the amount the researchers found in April. Over a half million users belong to these groups.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/abrambrown/2021/07/20/facebook-vaccine-misinformation-covid-19-coronavirus/>

'A form of brainwashing': why Trump voters are refusing to get a vaccine

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In downtown Little Rock, a chorus echoes around the room at Willy D's Rock & Roll Piano Bar as groups of friends clutching beers and each other sing along to the soul hit "Stand By Me". Yet far from standing together, the capital of Arkansas is deeply divided over how to deal with a resurgence of Covid-19. Cases are increasing, hospitals are filling up and health officials are struggling to convince residents in the city and across the state to be vaccinated. The pace of vaccinations in US states has become starkly correlated with politics, with Republican voters less likely than Democrats to have a jab, just as they are more reluctant to wear a mask or observe social distancing.

<https://www.ft.com/content/39ff87ce-57b7-4007-9504-7eb2c7bc911f>

US extends coronavirus closures of borders with Mexico, Canada

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The United States' land borders with Mexico and Canada will remain closed to non-essential travel for another month, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced, just days after Canada signalled plans to ease restrictions on travel from the US. The restrictions into the US by land or ferry will remain in place until at least August 21, the DHS said on Wednesday.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/21/us-extends-coronavirus-closures-of-borders-with-mexico-canada>

Australia's PM defends Covid vaccine rollout as half of population awakes in lockdown

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The Australian prime minister, Scott Morrison, has refused to apologise for his government's handling of the coronavirus vaccine rollout, amid testy exchanges during a radio interview as more than 13 million Australians – or half of the population – awoke in lockdown conditions. Morrison carried out a whistle-stop tour of radio stations on Wednesday as Covid measures spread further into the state of New South Wales, while Victoria reported a record one-day increase in cases and South Australia began its first full day of a week-long lockdown.

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/jul/21/australias-pm-defends-covid-vaccine-rollout-as-half-of-population-awakes-in-lockdown>

Australia, under lockdown, sees worrying jump in COVID-19 cases

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Australia's two largest states reported sharp increases in new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, a blow to hopes that lockdown restrictions would be lifted with more than half the country's population under stay-at-home orders. New South Wales (NSW) state, home to the country's most populous city Sydney, reported 110 new cases, up from 78 the day before, nearly four weeks into a lockdown of the city and surrounding areas to contain an outbreak of the virulent Delta variant.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australias-victoria-logs-biggest-daily-rise-covid-19-cases-week-2021-07-20/>

Novartis set to deliver 50 mln CureVac COVID-19 vaccines this year

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Novartis is still helping CureVac make COVID-19 vaccines and could expand its capacity to assist other vaccine manufacturers as well, finance chief Harry Kirsch told reporters on Wednesday. "We have started the production as planned. We are planning to deliver 50 million doses this year," Kirsch said of the CureVac deal when asked whether it could instead make its capacity free for others after CureVac said last month its COVID-19 jab was only 48% effective. Swiss drugmaker Novartis also assists Pfizer and BioNTech in making COVID-19 vaccines and can ramp up output for them or others if needed, he said.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/companies/novartis-set-to-deliver-50-mln-curevac-covid-19-vaccines-this-year/ar-AAmo2lo>

US life expectancy in 2020 saw biggest drop since WWII

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U.S. life expectancy fell by a year and a half in 2020, the largest one-year decline since World War II, public health officials said Wednesday. The decrease for both Black Americans and Hispanic Americans was even worse: three years. The drop spelled out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is due mainly to the COVID-19 pandemic, which health officials said is responsible for close to 74% of the overall life expectancy decline. More than 3.3 million Americans died last year, far more than any other year in U.S. history, with COVID-19 accounting for about 11% of those deaths.

<https://apnews.com/article/science-health-coronavirus-pandemic-fac0863b8c252d21d6f6a22a2e3eab86>

Pfizer-BioNTech to produce COVID-19 jabs with S African company

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Pfizer and BioNTech have said they struck a deal with South Africa-based company Biovac for the production of COVID-19 vaccines for the African Union (AU). In a statement published on Wednesday, the two companies said Cape Town-based Biovac will complete the last step in the manufacturing process, known as “fill and finish”, of the BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/21/pfizer-biontech-to-produce-covid-19-jabs-with-s-african>

WHO chief backs Tokyo Olympics days before opening ceremony

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Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), has thrown his weight behind the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics, even as a surge in the Delta variant drives a resurgence of COVID-19 around the world and the event faces continued opposition just days before the opening ceremony. Speaking to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Tokyo, Ghebreyesus, acknowledged the scale of the problem posed by the pandemic but drew parallels between the Olympic spirit and the need for governments and people around the world to work together to beat the virus.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/21/who-chief-backs-tokyo-olympics-as-first-events-begin>

Covid-19 antibodies detected in 67% of India's population

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Covid-19 antibodies have been detected in 67% of the population of India, according to a new survey, indicating how widely the virus spread through communities during the second wave. India's fourth national sero-survey, which examines the prevalence of Covid-19 antibodies either through infection or vaccination, found that 67.6% of the population of more than 1.3 billion has coronavirus antibodies. The survey also demonstrated the slow pace of India's vaccination programme. Of those surveyed, 62.2% had not been vaccinated, 24.8% had taken one dose and 13% were fully vaccinated.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/21/covid-19-antibodies-detected-in-67-of-indias-population?utm_term=Autofeed&CMP=tw_t_gu&utm_medium&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1626848676

With Biovac agreement, Pfizer and BioNTech extend their COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing network to Africa

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Bypassing patent protections on coronavirus vaccines was one proposal floated in recent months to boost supplies in poor countries. But it's not a short-term solution and, as some analysts suggest, it may not even be a feasible one. For now, the quickest and most-efficient way to supply lesser developed nations with vaccines is to leave it to the companies currently producing them and their regional partners, experts have argued. One such partnership came together on Wednesday, when Pfizer and BioNTech revealed that they will manufacture their co-developed vaccine in South Africa with help from local producer Biovac.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/agreement-biovac-pfizer-biontech-extend-their-covid-19-vaccine-manufacturing-network-to>

Johnson & Johnson eyes \$2.5B in COVID vaccine sales as key immunology, oncology meds trounce expectations

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Johnson & Johnson certainly hasn't had the easiest COVID-19 shot rollout. Still, with sales predictions ranging in the billions and a series of manufacturing improvements ongoing, the company sees its pandemic hustle as the start of a new era for an emerging vaccine business. Johnson & Johnson is

forecasting \$2.5 billion in full-year sales of its one-shot COVID-19 vaccine, company executives said Wednesday on a call with analysts. The vaccine pulled in \$164 million for the second quarter and \$264 million during the first six months of the year, chief financial officer Joe Wolk said. With pandemic revenues in the mix, the company anticipates between \$93.8 billion and 94.6 billion in total sales for 2021.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/johnson-johnson-eyes-2-5b-covid-vaccine-sales-as-it-embarks-new-vibrant-vaccine-business>

COVID-19 Vaccine Success Could Be Measured With One Number

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The term correlate of protection doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, but it's one of the sexiest concepts in the field of vaccinology. Correlates are biological benchmarks—measurements of a single immune molecule or cell—that can show that a vaccine is achieving its desired effect. With a correlate in hand, researchers can confirm how well a shot is working and identify the rare individuals in whom it doesn't take; they can suss out the need for boosters and fast-track the development of new vaccines. At their most powerful, correlates of protection boil down the complexities of an immune response to a single value—one that can confidently affirm that a person won't get infected or seriously sick. "It's kind of a magic number," Ali Ellebedy, an immunologist at Washington University in St. Louis, told me. "It's the big holy grail," Emory University's Sri Edupuganti says. "It's what we dream about," Cornell's Sallie Permar told me last month.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/07/correlates-of-protection-vaccine-immunity/619508/>

Vietnam produces first batch of Russian COVID-19 vaccine

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Vietnam has produced the first test batch of Sputnik V vaccine against COVID-19, Russia's RDIF sovereign wealth fund and Vietnamese pharmaceutical firm Vabiotech said on Wednesday, as the Southeast Asian country battles its worst outbreak so far. The first validation samples taken from the batch will be shipped to the Gamaleya Center in Russia for quality control checks, the fund and the company said in a joint statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-produces-first-batch-russian-covid-19-vaccine-2021-07-21/>

J&J forecasts \$2.5 bln in COVID-19 vaccine sales this year

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Johnson & Johnson forecast \$2.5 billion in 2021 sales for its COVID-19 shot and set a lower production target for the vaccine as lengthy manufacturing problems took a toll. The company now expects to produce 500 million to 600 million doses of its one-shot vaccine this year, Chief Financial Officer Joseph Wolk told CNBC on Wednesday, down from its original goal to produce a billion shots this year.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/johnson-johnson-forecasts-25-bln-2021-sales-covid-19-shot-2021-07-21/>

Nine in 10 adults across UK likely to have Covid-19 antibodies

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A round nine in 10 adults in all parts of the UK are now likely to have Covid-19 antibodies, new figures suggest. The estimates range from 88.6% in Scotland to 92.6% in Wales, with 90.0% for Northern Ireland and 91.9% for England. The presence of coronavirus antibodies suggests someone has had the infection in the past or has been vaccinated. It takes between two and three weeks after infection or vaccination for the body to make enough antibodies to fight the virus.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/antibodies-office-for-national-statistics-northern-ireland-scotland-english-b946894.html>

UK records 96 more Covid-19 deaths - nearly double last Tuesday's figure and the biggest since March 24

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The UK has recorded another 46,558 Covid-19 cases while single-day deaths from the disease have jumped to 96 - the highest figure since March. The latest infections tally is the biggest Tuesday figure since January 5 and brings the country's total case load to 5,519,602. The seven-day rolling average of cases has jumped to beyond 45,000 this week, providing further evidence of the growing third wave of coronavirus infections sweeping the country.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/uk-covid-cases-latest-daily-deaths-pandemic-public-health-england-b946753.html>

US life expectancy falls by more than a year due to Covid-19 pandemic, CDC study says

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Life expectancy in the United States fell by a year and a half in 2020 primarily due to increases in death due to the Covid-19 pandemic, according to early data released by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "U.S. life expectancy at birth for 2020, based on nearly final data, was 77.3 years, the lowest it has been since 2003," researchers at the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics wrote in a new report published on Wednesday.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/21/health/life-expectancy-covid-19-pandemic-cdc-study-wellness/index.html>

SARS-CoV-2: Achilles' heel of viral RNA

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The scientists in the COVID-19-NMR consortium, which is coordinated by Professor Harald Schwalbe from the Institute of Organic Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Goethe University, have now completed an important first step in the development of such a new class of SARS-CoV-2 drugs. They have identified 15 short segments of the SARS-CoV-2 genome that are very similar in various coronaviruses and are known to perform essential regulatory functions. In the course of 2020 too, these segments were very rarely affected by mutations.

<https://phys.org/news/2021-07-sars-cov-achilles-heel-viral-rna.html>

WHO leader says virus risk inevitable at Tokyo Olympics

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The Tokyo Olympics should not be judged by the tally of COVID-19 cases that arise because eliminating risk is impossible, the head of the World Health Organization told sports officials Wednesday as events began in Japan. How infections are handled is what matters most, WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a speech to an International Olympic Committee meeting. "The mark of success is making sure that any cases are identified, isolated, traced and cared for as quickly as possible and onward transmission is interrupted," he said. The number of Games-linked COVID-19 cases in Japan this month was 79 on Wednesday, with more international athletes testing positive at home and unable to travel.

<https://apnews.com/article/2020-tokyo-olympics-sports-health-tokyo-coronavirus-pandemic-3f14dab963daec8932f120bcdc9c3742>

South Korea reports record daily infections as Delta variant drives surge

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South Korea reported a daily record of 1,784 coronavirus cases for Tuesday, breaking a mark set last week, as the authorities struggled to get on top of a surge in outbreaks linked to the Delta variant. Transmission rates have been kept relatively low across the country despite no lockdowns thanks in part to aggressive testing and tracing, but the fourth wave of infections is proving particularly hard

to contain as the unvaccinated fall victim to the Delta strain. Genetic analysis of 2,381 infections last week found nearly 40% were the Delta variant, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said on Tuesday. More than half the total 1,741 Delta variant cases since December were diagnosed last week.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/south-korea-reports-new-daily-record-1784-covid-19-cases-kdca-2021-07-21/>

Turkey's virus cases nearly twice the low touched in early July

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Turkey's daily coronavirus cases rose to 8,780 on Tuesday, nearly double a low water mark touched earlier this month, while 46 new related deaths were logged, according to the government tally. Infections remain well down from a wave in April-May when new COVID-19 cases peaked above 60,000. They fell to 4,418 on July 4 in the wake of a stringent lockdown that ended in mid-May.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-virus-cases-nearly-twice-low-touched-early-july-2021-07-20/>

Americas are facing pandemic of the unvaccinated, PAHO says

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The Americas are facing a pandemic of the unvaccinated, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said on Wednesday, as it warned that countries with low inoculation rates are seeing increases in COVID-19 and repeated a call for vaccine donations. "We face a pandemic of the unvaccinated, and the only way to stop it is to expand vaccination," PAHO director Carissa Etienne said at a weekly briefing. "Vaccines are critical, even if no vaccine is 100% effective."

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/americas-is-facing-pandemic-unvaccinated-paho-says-2021-07-21/>

Covid-19: Businesses forced to close as staff are told to isolate

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With most lockdown measures lifted in England, businesses might finally be expecting things to be returning to normal. But many have had to temporarily close after their staff were either "pinged" and told to isolate by the NHS Covid-19 Test and Trace app or contacted by NHS Test and Trace directly. How do owners feel about this latest blow to their livelihoods?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-57885623>

Delta variant is the majority COVID-19 variant in France, PM says

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The Delta variant of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is now the majority variant of the virus circulating in France, French Prime Minister Jean Castex said on Wednesday. Castex told TF1 television that the major steps taken to tackle fourth wave of infections in the country have been settled upon by a cabinet meeting of the government. "We are in the fourth wave", Castex said. "The Delta variant is the majority one, it is more contagious", he added

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-pm-covid-delta-variant-is-now-majority-covid-variant-france-2021-07-21/>

More than 91 million live in US counties with high Covid-19 infections. It's time to reset and put masks back on, expert says

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With the highly contagious Delta variant spreading, particularly among unvaccinated Americans, it may be time for much of the country to put masks back on, experts said. "We are at a very different point in the pandemic than we were a month ago," Dr. Leana Wen told CNN on Tuesday. "And, therefore, we should follow the example of LA County and say that if there are places where vaccinated and unvaccinated people are mixing, then indoor mask mandates should still apply." Los

Angeles County reinstated a mask mandate over the weekend, requiring masking indoors regardless of vaccination status.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/21/health/us-coronavirus-wednesday/index.html>

Child cases of Covid-19 are rising as schools gear up to reopen. But vaccines for the youngest are still months away

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New Covid-19 cases among children are back on the rise after months of declines, just as schools across the United States are gearing up to reopen in a few weeks. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) said Tuesday more than 23,550 child cases of Covid were reported between July 8 and 15 -- nearly double what was being reported in late June. Child age ranges vary by state, according to the group's most recent report, with more than half of states defining children as anyone 19 or younger, and two states -- Utah and Florida -- limiting the range to anyone 14 or younger.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/20/health/covid-children-cases-schools-reopening/index.html>

Japan health experts warns rising COVID-19 cases could burden Tokyo medical system

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Japanese health experts said on Wednesday there were concerns that rising COVID-19 cases in Tokyo could add to the burden on the medical system and create delays in patient care. Extra caution is needed going into a four-day holiday as vacation times have previously been linked to infection spikes, Takaji Wakita, the head of the National Institute of Infectious Diseases, told reporters after a meeting of health advisors to the government.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-health-experts-warns-rising-covid-19-cases-could-burden-tokyo-medical-2021-07-21/>

COVID-19: 100,000 will die of coronavirus globally between now and end of the Olympics, WHO chief predicts

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More than 100,000 people will die from COVID-19 around the world between now and the end of the Olympic Games, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) has predicted. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a meeting of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Tokyo that "the pandemic is a test and the world is failing". He also warned that anyone who thinks the pandemic is over because cases are under control in their country is living in "a fool's paradise".

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-100-000-will-die-of-coronavirus-globally-between-now-and-the-end-of-the-olympics-who-chief-predicts-12360199>

More infectious Delta variant makes up 83% of new US coronavirus cases as vaccine hesitancy persists

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The more contagious Delta variant of coronavirus now makes up 83% of sequenced samples in the United States, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Tuesday. "This is a dramatic increase, up from 50% for the week of July 3," Walensky said in a Senate committee hearing. Health experts have said the Delta variant is more transmissible than any other identified variant so far. "We should think about the Delta variant as the 2020 version of Covid-19 on steroids," Andy Slavitt, a former senior adviser to Joe Biden's Covid Response Team, told CNN last week.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/20/health/us-coronavirus-tuesday/index.html>

Vietnam produces first batch of Russian COVID-19 vaccine

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Vietnam has produced the first test batch of Sputnik V vaccine against COVID-19, Russia's RDIF sovereign wealth fund and Vietnamese pharmaceutical firm Vabiotech said on Wednesday, as the Southeast Asian country battles its worst outbreak so far. The first validation samples taken from the batch will be shipped to the Gamaleya Center in Russia for quality control checks, the fund and the company said in a joint statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-produces-first-batch-russian-covid-19-vaccine-2021-07-21/>

Conservative media offers mixed messages on COVID-19 vaccine

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When Dr. Alexa Mises Malchuk talks to patients about the COVID-19 vaccine, she tries to feel out where they get their information from. “Sometimes I feel like the education I have to provide depends on what news channel that they watch,” the doctor in Durham, North Carolina, said. The mixed messaging can come from the same media outlet — and even the same source. On Fox News Channel on Monday, host Sean Hannity looked straight into the camera to deliver a clear message: “It absolutely makes sense for many Americans to get vaccinated. I believe in science. I believe in the science of vaccinations.”

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-health-government-and-politics-arts-and-entertainment-media-74f36fead348661aeba170422381a972>