

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

16th Aug 2021

Overnight News RoundUp

One Minute Overview

Anger at unvaccinated - [New polling in the USA for The Atlantic suggests there is growing cross-party anger at the unvaccinated who are preventing the country from getting a deadly pandemic under control](#)

UK medicine regulatory staff to be made redundant - [The UK government has floated the idea of making up to 25% of its UK medicine regulatory staff redundant, potentially jeopardising the handling of the pandemic moving forward](#)

Israel - waning antibodies in elderly, doubling bed capacity, 3rd booster shot - [Israel which is to some degree a petri dish of how effective the coronavirus vaccines are, is now seeing a reduction in effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine against the Delta variant, a waning of antibodies in the elderly - and it is now doubling bed capacity and launching a 3rd vaccine booster shot for the vulnerable](#)

Masking in schools work as a mitigation measure - [For month than a year health experts studied North Carolina school districts and charter schools, covering upwards of a million cases - looking at the efficacy of mitigation measures such as masks and concluded universal masking is a close second to vaccines in terms of blocking infection](#)

Iceland - cases rise sharply but few seriously ill as vaccines work - [Just one month after the Icelandic government scrapped all Covid-19 restrictions, masks, social distancing and capacity limits have returned. Contrary to the believe this shows vaccine inefficiency, experts say the reverse is true. Of the 1,300 people currently infected, just 2% are in the hospital and the Iceland has not had a virus death since late May. The country's top health officials link most of the cases to nightclubs and to residents who travelled to London to attend Euro 2020 football matches. Adjusted for population iceland the USA are reporting new cases at a clip that rank among the top two dozen countries in the world, but the USA has more infections that are going undetected because of lower rates of testing](#)

'Everybody I Know Is Pissed Off'

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The vaccinated, across party lines, have kind of had it with the unvaccinated, an array of new polls suggests. While most state and national GOP leaders are focused on defending the rights of unvaccinated Americans, new polling shows that the large majority of vaccinated adults—including a substantial portion of Republicans—support tougher measures against those who have refused COVID-19 shots.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/08/vaccine-mandates-republicans-democrats/619735/>

Staff at UK medicines regulator express alarm at plan for budget cuts

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Senior personnel at the UK regulator responsible for medicines have expressed “deep concern” over outline plans to make up to 25 per cent of staff redundant as it is forced to embark on budget cuts. The proposals by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency to restructure because

of financial pressures come despite it being lauded by the government for its “phenomenal contribution” to tackling Covid-19. It also has a central role in Boris Johnson’s plans to put life sciences at the core of his “build back better” agenda for economic growth and innovation.

<https://www.ft.com/content/8ef390b4-2d57-42fa-9ac6-88c08307eade>

First to vaccinate and first to party, Israel now mulls lockdowns

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Naftali Bennett was honest with Israelis when he announced the measure on Wednesday: the government was trying to cushion the blow. On August 1, it had started offering people over 60 a third shot of the Pfizer vaccine, embarking on its own public health experiment as it tumbled into an unpredictable fourth wave. “We have to raise hospital capacity to buy time until the vaccination campaign goes into effect and starts to stem the outbreak,” Bennett said.

<https://www.ft.com/content/c21e2053-0373-4b8e-80b7-fad10f235604>

We Studied One Million Students. This Is What We Learned About Masking.

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For more than a year, we’ve worked with North Carolina school districts and charter schools, studying the rate of new Covid cases, the efficacy of mitigation measures such as masking and the increased risks of participating in school-sponsored sports. We have learned a few things for certain: Although vaccination is the best way to prevent Covid-19, universal masking is a close second, and with masking in place, in-school learning is safe and more effective than remote instruction, regardless of community rates of infection.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/studied-one-million-students-learned-115945811.html>

Iceland has been a vaccination success. Why is it seeing a coronavirus surge?

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What happened to Iceland? The island nation that has been praised for its coronavirus response and its world-leading vaccination rate is now seeing its highest levels of infection since the start of the pandemic. Just one month after the government scrapped all covid-19 restrictions, masks, social distancing and capacity limits have returned. And U.S. authorities last week warned Americans to stay away. Vaccine opponents have gleefully pointed to Iceland as proof that the shots are a “failure.” But contrary to online misinformation and conspiratorial social media posts, infectious-disease experts say Iceland’s outbreak actually illustrates how effective the vaccines are at preventing the virus’s most severe impacts.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/iceland-covid-surge-vaccines/2021/08/14/bdd88d04-fabd-11eb-911c-524bc8b68f17_story.html?utm_campaign=wp_post_most&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpisrc=nl_most&carta-url=https%3A%2F%2Fs2.washingtonpost.com%2Fcar-ln-tr%2F3468c40%2F611936cc9d2fda2f47f56a32%2F5972f23fae7e8a1cf4b34816%2F13%2F72%2F611936cc9d2fda2f47f56a32

Back of the line: Charity only goes so far in world vaccines

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An international system to share coronavirus vaccines was supposed to guarantee that low and middle-income countries could get doses without being last in line and at the mercy of unreliable donations. It hasn’t worked out that way. In late June alone, the initiative known as COVAX sent some 530,000 doses to Britain – more than double the amount sent that month to the entire continent of Africa. Under COVAX, countries were supposed to give money so vaccines could be set aside, both as donations to poor countries and as an insurance policy for richer ones to buy doses if theirs fell through. Some rich countries, including those in the European Union, calculated that they had more than enough doses available through bilateral deals and ceded their allocated COVAX

doses to poorer count

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-middle-east-africa-europe-coronavirus-pandemic-5e57879c6cb22d96b942cbc973b9296c>

Pfizer chief Albert Bourla: 'We are the most efficient vaccine machine'

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Bourla, to be fair, has much to celebrate. The only reason we are able to have lunch at this bustling Greek restaurant in Hudson Yards is that both of us have been jabbed with two doses of his company's vaccine. The inoculation, developed with Germany's BioNTech, is the most successful in the world: the first to be authorised by US regulators, it is over 95 per cent effective against the original strain of the virus, conferring the highest degree of protection of all the jabs. Pfizer has shipped more doses than any other western company, 1.2bn and counting.

<https://www.ft.com/content/97c597dc-03b1-4ece-a302-f9793698ded6>

Australia secures 1 million more Pfizer vaccine doses from Poland

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Australia has secured about 1 million additional doses of Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine that will start arriving on Sunday night, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said. The doses, provided by the Polish government, will be targeted for Australians ages 20 to 39 years old, particularly in Sydney where transmission numbers have spiked to record highs. Australia previously contracted for 14 million Pfizer doses, Morrison said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australia-secures-1-million-more-pfizer-vaccine-doses-poland-2021-08-15/>

Olympics now ended, Japan races to vaccinate as virus surges

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Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is pinning his hopes on vaccinations, which started slow but now are making good progress. How this race between shots and disease finishes may determine Suga's political future, not to mention the health of tens of thousands. Suga seems optimistic vaccines will win, but with only about 36% of the population fully vaccinated, experts say the virus's highly infectious delta variant is pulling ahead. They are urging the government to put more teeth in its weak state of emergency. Japan has managed the COVID-19 pandemic better than many countries, without the kind of restrictive lockdown used in other nations, but some believe that may now be needed.

<https://apnews.com/article/2020-tokyo-olympics-sports-lifestyle-japan-coronavirus-pandemic-8b48db716e4c0cdd132822a19ef7b112>

North Texas runs out of pediatric ICU beds amid Covid surge

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"If you're not vaccinated, you're playing Russian roulette," Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council's CEO said. "Please get vaccinated. Just about all of the patients in our hospitals are unvaccinated."

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/north-texas-runs-out-pediatric-icu-beds-amid-covid-surge-n1276783>

IBM to allow only fully vaccinated to return to U.S. offices from Sept. 7

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International Business Machines Corp (IBM.N) said on Friday that it would allow only fully vaccinated U.S. employees to return to offices, which are set to open from Sept. 7, given the rapid spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19. "We will still open many of our U.S. sites, where local clinical conditions allow, the week of Sept. 7. However, the reopenings will only be for fully vaccinated employees who choose to come into the office," Chief Human Resources Officer Nickle LaMoreaux said in a memo sent to employees.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/ibm-allow-only-fully-vaccinated-return-us-offices-sept-7-2021-08-13/>

The UK is about to hit its Covid vaccine ceiling

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In most older age groups, vaccination numbers have started to flatline. On July 1, 85.5 per cent of people aged 50-54 in England had had a first dose, but by August 1 that had crept up to just 86 per cent. Uptake remains high across all age groups – and making the vaccine available to all 16 and 17-year olds will further boost coverage – but it remains likely that millions of people in the UK will not receive a Covid vaccine – either because they are too young to be eligible, for health reasons or because they haven't come forward.

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/covid-vaccine-ceiling-uk>

Canada Will Require All Air Travelers To Be Vaccinated In A Broad New Policy

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All passengers and workers on commercial air flights in Canada will soon have to prove they've been vaccinated against the coronavirus. Canada's government will also require all federal workers to be vaccinated, citing a "dynamic public health situation" due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new travel vaccination policy will apply to passengers and workers in the federally regulated air, rail and cruise ship sectors. It will be enacted "as soon as possible in the fall and no later than the end of October," the Canadian Treasury Board said on Friday.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/08/13/1027498555/canada-vaccination-air-travelers-requirement>

Canberra paramedics lead the nation in COVID-19 vaccination rates

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Canberra's ambulance officers lead the nation in COVID-19 vaccination, with more than 90 per cent of staff fully vaccinated according to an opt-in survey. While vaccination rates were not available in all states and territories, the most recent data provided showed Canberra, Darwin and Melbourne had the highest rates of vaccination for ambulance staff.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-08-15/canberra-paramedics-lead-nation-in-vaccination-rates/100372550>

US mulls COVID vaccine boosters for elderly as early as fall

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Warning of tough days ahead with surging COVID-19 infections, the director of the NIH said the U.S. could decide in the next couple weeks whether to offer coronavirus booster shots to Americans this fall. Among the first to receive them could be health care workers, nursing home residents and other older Americans. Dr. Francis Collins also pleaded anew for unvaccinated people to get their shots, calling them "sitting ducks" for a delta variant that is ravaging the country and showing little sign of letting up. "This is going very steeply upward with no signs of having peaked out," he said.

<https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-health-coronavirus-pandemic-341b90f35438f52ccd7ad57ec80cc3ea>

Amid shortages, Africans scramble to be fully immunized

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In the aftermath of a brutal wave of infections driven by the delta variant, many Ugandans seeking a first dose of vaccine are competing with hundreds of thousands who have waited months for a second dose. But the country now has only 285,000 shots donated by Norway. The delta surge has touched off a vaccination rush across Africa that the slow trickle of donated doses can't keep up with, compounding the continent's vaccine disadvantage compared with the rest of the world. The urgency to obtain a second dose across much of the world's least vaccinated continent contrasts sharply with rich countries now beginning to authorize third doses.

<https://apnews.com/article/africa-health-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-4223767b41b3c7b6cd81ead14d6c04e7>

In Yemen's north, Houthis face virus with outright denial

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It's not just a struggling health care system that's to blame for the unaccounted for deaths. In interviews with The Associated Press, more than a dozen doctors, aid workers, Sanaa residents and relatives of those believed to have died from the virus said the Houthi authorities are approaching the pandemic with such outright denial that it threatens to further endanger the already vulnerable population.

<https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-health-coronavirus-pandemic-united-nations-yemen-1d134157c61c85c844667613183ac1b3>

'I feel defeated': Mask and vaccine mandates cause new divides as officials try to head off virus surge

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The summer of 2021 is a season of mandates, with rules requiring masks and vaccines reemerging as the pandemic's latest cultural and political flash point. In many parts of the country — including states hit hardest by a resurgence of the virus — the mandates are pitting blue cities against red governors, sparking protests and placing new burdens on already harried workers.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/08/14/mask-vaccination-mandates/>

Facebook and YouTube execs say removing Covid-19 misinformation isn't enough

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New falsehoods have emerged to match every stage of pandemic response. Unquestionably, that misinformation has been amplified on social media platforms, as the world locked down in waves and citizens looked online for answers. On Thursday, leaders from Facebook and YouTube joined a panel at the global conference of the Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) to discuss the threat misleading information poses to the pandemic response. But even as vaccine misinformation continues to hamper vaccination efforts in the United States, the conversation failed to address the impact of falsehoods on these platforms head-on — instead, focusing on platforms' efforts to proactively share accurate, trusted Covid-19 information.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/08/13/vaccine-misinformation-covid19-facebook-youtube/>

Misinformation at public forums vexes local boards, big tech

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There are plenty of places to turn for accurate information about COVID-19. Your physician. Local health departments. The U.S. CDC. But not, perhaps, your local government's public comment session. During a meeting of the St. Louis County Council earlier this month, opponents of a possible mask mandate made so many misleading comments about masks, vaccines and COVID-19 that YouTube removed the video for violating its policies against false claims about the virus. "I hope no one is making any medical decisions based on what they hear at our public forums," said County Councilwoman Lisa Clancy, who supports mask wearing and said she believes most of her constituents do too. The video was restored, but Clancy's worries about the impact of that misinformation remain.

<https://apnews.com/article/technology-business-health-coronavirus-pandemic-misinformation-fc03b8bc31c00190345f44fcc4371cd1>

Covid US: Vaccine card black market emerges as New York and other cities bring in mandates

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Most are being sold on Telegram, an encrypted site that is favored among people who don't trust typical Silicon Valley giants like Facebook and Twitter. The blank cardboard cards are being sold for anything between \$24 and \$400. The Attorney Generals of multiple states wrote to Twitter, Shopify and eBay asking them to crackdown. A California father and son were arrested trying to vacation in Hawaii with fake cards. A California bar owner who was selling them was also arrested earlier this year. NYC will start requiring vaccine status in restaurants and gyms will start requiring them from August 16. New Orleans, Los Angeles and San Francisco are also bringing them in. Businesses will have a grace period before having to enforce them on September 13.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9891227/Rise-vaccine-card-black-market-New-York-cities-bring-mandates.html>

WHO questions Chinese denials over Covid-19's Patient Zero

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Covid-19's Patient Zero may have been working in a laboratory in Wuhan, China. China is coming under pressure to share data and open up its research centres. The World Health Organisation fears the virus may have leaked by human error.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9894503/WHO-questions-Chinese-denials-Covid-19s-Patient-Zero.html>

'Pretty devastating': Sydney councillor delivers food in lockdown districts

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China is coming under pressure to share data and open up its virus research centres in Wuhan to proper outside investigation amid growing credibility for the theory that a laboratory incident might have sparked the Covid pandemic. It follows an admission by the head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) origins study that Patient Zero may have been linked to research or sample collection by Wuhan scientists – as suggested by the US State Department in January. Peter Ben Embarek, a Danish food scientist, led the WHO team that earlier this year collaborated with China to dismiss the possibility of a laboratory leak as 'extremely unlikely' but now says there might have been 'human error'.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/pretty-devastating-sydney-councillor-delivers-food-lockdown-districts-2021-08-13/>

Health minister wants S.Africa to stay at current lockdown level

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South Africa's health minister said on Friday he would not recommend a relaxation of COVID-19 lockdown measures despite a downward trend in infections. He said the country of 60 million had fully vaccinated only around 4 million people as a wave of infections driven by the more infectious Delta variant strains over-burdened hospitals and health workers.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/health-minister-wants-safrica-stay-current-lockdown-level-2021-08-13/>

England's Covid R rate between 0.8 and 1 but infections remain high across UK

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An expert has warned of a fourth wave of Covid infections after the summer as people return indoors, as the latest ONS figures show infections across the country rising.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/englands-covid-r-rate-between-24758429>

Americans With Weak Immune Systems Will Get 3 Covid Shots

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Americans with weakened immune systems will be allowed to get three shots of Covid-19 vaccine.

after U.S. regulators authorized giving an extra dose to the most vulnerable people. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's action expands the use of vaccines from Moderna Inc. and the partnership of Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE for organ transplant recipients and patients with other conditions like cancer that hobble the body's natural infection-fighting response. The decision doesn't apply to other fully vaccinated individuals, the agency said in a statement.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-13/u-s-clears-third-covid-shot-for-immunocompromised-patients>

India's Chronic Disease Burden Helped Fuel Covid's Brutal Waves

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High levels of chronic disease in India, such as diabetes and hypertension, helped stoke the brutal coronavirus waves that hit world's second-most populous nation during the pandemic, researchers said. The findings from one of the few large-scale studies of Covid-19 in India showed patients from the southern district of Madurai had a higher risk of dying than those in China, Europe, South Korea and the U.S., even though 63% of those tested were asymptomatic. Chronic health conditions in the community may have played a role, according to the report published in The Lancet.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-08-13/india-s-chronic-disease-burden-helped-fuel-covid-s-brutal-wave>
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New Covid variants 'will set us back a year', experts warn UK government

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Ministers are being pressed to reveal what contingency plans are in place to deal with a future Covid variant that evades current vaccines, amid warnings from scientific advisers that such an outcome could set the battle against the pandemic back a year or more. Recent papers produced by the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) have suggested that the arrival of a variant that evades vaccines is a "realistic possibility". Sage backed continued work on new vaccines that reduce infection and transmission more than current jabs, the creation of more vaccine-production facilities in the UK and lab-based studies to predict evolution of variants.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/15/new-covid-variants-will-set-us-back-a-year-experts-warn-uk-government>

CDC, FDA recommend 3rd COVID vaccine dose for immune-compromised

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Moderately and severely immunocompromised adults should receive a third dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) advised today following the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) authorization of third shots. A third dose should be given at least 28 days after the initial vaccinations series is complete, and the same vaccine should be used when possible, according to the FDA. In addition, the ACIP said that the additional dose would be given ideally 2 weeks before the start of immunosuppressive therapies.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/08/cdc-fda-recommend-3rd-covid-vaccine-dose-immune-compromised>

11% of early COVID-19 was acquired in-hospital, study says

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More than 1 in 10 COVID-19 patients from 314 UK hospitals acquired their infection from the hospital early in the pandemic, according to a research letter in The Lancet. "There are likely to be a number of reasons why many patients were infected in these care settings," said study author Chris A. Green, MBBS, DPhil, in a Lancaster University press release. "These include the large numbers of patients admitted to hospitals with limited facilities for case isolation, limited access to rapid and reliable diagnostic testing in the early stages of the outbreak, the challenges around access to and best use of [personal protective equipment], our understanding of when patients are most infectious

in their illness, some misclassification of cases due to presentation with atypical symptoms, and an under-appreciation of the role of airborne transmission."

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/08/11-early-covid-19-was-acquired-hospital-study-says>

As Children's COVID Cases Surge, There's Another Virus On The Rise

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Early versions of COVID-19 largely spared children but the delta variant proved to be much less discriminating, and has led to more child hospitalizations. Now, health care workers on the front lines say there is another frightening prospect looming: a surge in children diagnosed with a combination of COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus. Pediatric hospitals in Texas — and around the country — are reporting unseasonably early outbreaks of RSV, a respiratory virus that mostly manifests as a mild illness with cold-like symptoms in adults but that can cause pneumonia and bronchiolitis in very young children. The CDC reports it can be life-threatening in infants and young adults.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/14/1027663917/rsv-covid-children>

Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine protects against Delta variant, study finds

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Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine protects people for at least six months and likely longer -- even against new variants, researchers reported Thursday. Protection against the Delta variant, now dominant across the US, barely waned, the National Institutes of Health-led team found. The team will continue to look for evidence of protection beyond six months. "High levels of binding antibodies recognizing all tested variants, including B.1.351 (Beta) and B.1.617.2 (Delta), were maintained in all subjects over this time period," immunologist Nicole Doria-Rose and colleagues at the NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases wrote in their report, published in the journal Science.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/08/12/health/moderna-vaccine-protection/index.html>

Moderna COVID-19 vaccine found to be still effective after six months

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A team of researchers at the U.S. National Institutes of Health, working with colleagues from Emory University School of Medicine, Emmes Company, Moderna, Inc. and Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute, has found via testing, that the Moderna vaccine is still effective against COVID-19 six months after people are fully vaccinated. Their paper has been published in the journal Science.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-08-moderna-covid-vaccine-effective-months.html>

Thailand projects doubling of daily coronavirus infections next month

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Thailand could see coronavirus cases double to 45,000 per day by early next month, even with current lockdown measures in place, its COVID-19 taskforce said on Friday, as authorities urged people to stay home to reduce infection risks.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-reports-second-day-record-coronavirus-cases-2021-08-13/>

Philippine medical workers under strain as COVID-19 cases jump

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The Philippines reported on Friday its second-largest daily increase in COVID-19 infections, providing more evidence of how the virulent Delta variant may be spreading and ramping up pressure on the country's already stretched healthcare system. Hundreds of hospitals in the country are nearing full capacity, with some facilities reporting they have run out of intensive care unit beds for COVID-19 patients, leaving health care workers, who are forced to work longer hours, exhausted.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-extends-travel-ban-10-countries-over-delta-concerns-2021-08-13/>

US coronavirus: 8 states account for half of US Covid-19 hospitalizations. And the surge is overwhelming health care workers

US coronavirus: 8 states account for half of US Covid-19 hospitalizations. And the surge is overwhelming health care workers

As experts race to mitigate the spread of Covid-19 by encouraging vaccinations and mask wearing, hospital systems in a handful of states are now straining to keep up with the surge.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/us-coronavirus-8-states-account-for-half-of-us-covid-19-hospitalizations-and-the-surge-is-overwhelming-health-care-workers/ar-AANh4RD>

Covid-19 third wave projections revised down by Sage following last month's fall in cases

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Scientists dramatically revised down their projections for the third wave of Covid-19 hospital admissions for August after cases began to fall last month, new papers have revealed. Modelling for the Government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) shows a stark difference in how the third wave might pan out for this month, in projections made just one week apart. While this shift is to be expected as the UK epidemic changes, it underlines how scientists believe the outlook for the rest of the summer is brighter than they thought a month ago.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/covid-19-third-wave-projections-revised-down-by-sage-following-last-months-fall-in-cases-1150521>

This is starting to look really ominous in the South,' expert says, as US is among nations with highest rate of new Covid-19 cases

'This is starting to look really ominous in the South,' expert says, as US is among nations with highest rate of new Covid-19 cases

The US remains among nations with the highest rate of new Covid-19 cases, driven mostly by a surge in the South, where many states are lagging in getting people vaccinated against the coronavirus. "This is starting to look really ominous in the South. ... If you look at rates of transmission in Florida and Louisiana, they're actually probably the highest in the world," Dr. Peter Hotez, the dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, told CNN's Anderson Cooper on Friday. Infection rates began to plummet in the US in the spring as vaccines became widely available, while the seven-day moving average of daily confirmed cases climbed in other nations, including India and Brazil, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/14/health/us-coronavirus-saturday/index.html>

Moscow reports surge in deaths last month due to coronavirus

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Deaths in Moscow increased 60% in July compared to the same month a year earlier, health officials in Russia's capital said as the country reported a new daily record for COVID-19 fatalities. Moscow's Health Department said Friday that 17,

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-reports-surge-in-deaths-last-month-due-to-coronavirus-covid-russia-moscow-b1902338.html>

Vietnam's daily new COVID-19 cases hit another new high

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Vietnam reported a new high of 9,716 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, surpassing the previous record of 9,690 cases on Aug. 8, according to the country's Ministry of Health. The new infections, including 9,710 locally transmitted and six imported, brought the total tally to 265,464, with 5,437 deaths, the ministry said. Most of the community cases were detected in southern Vietnam,

including 4,231 in the epicenter Ho Chi Minh City, 2,029 in the nearby Binh Duong province, and 1,023 in Dong Nai province. As many as 96,985 COVID-19 patients have so far recovered, up 4,247 from Friday, while 13.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered nationwide, according to the ministry.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-08/14/c_1310127283.htm

Florida Hospitals Are “Stacking Patients In Hallways” As The Delta Variant Surges

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The calls came fast, first with a cardiac arrest case, next with multiple patients who were having trouble breathing, and all were suspected to have COVID. Usually, Stew Eubanks, a paramedic in Sumter County, Florida, deals with lots of minor emergencies, but now it's mainly life-threatening cases. After a nonstop 24 hours, his Wednesday shift ended with another cardiac arrest. “It's bad right now,” Eubanks, 39, told BuzzFeed News. “We're stacking patients in the hallways, stacking patients in the waiting room.”

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/amberjamieson/florida-covid-delta-variant-surge>

Iran will impose 6-day 'general lockdown' over coronavirus

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Iran says it will impose a six-day-long “general lockdown” in cities across the country after being hit by what it describes as its fifth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, state media reported Saturday. The lockdown includes all bazaars, markets and public offices, as well as movie theaters, gyms and restaurants in all Iranian cities. The lockdown will begin on Monday and will last through Saturday. The national coronavirus taskforce, which issued the decision, also ordered a travel ban between all Iranian cities from Sunday to Friday.

<https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-health-iran-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-fa3e6cfe671e5ee5cdeb9110fba4423>

‘Literally a war’: Australia state goes into COVID lockdown

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Australia's most populous state New South Wales (NSW) went into a snap lockdown on Saturday as COVID-19 cases continue to surge. The order comes as locally transmitted infections jumped by 466 over the previous 24 hours in the country's most populous state. “To minimise movement and protect our communities from the evolving COVID situation in Sydney, stay-at-home orders will be introduced for all of Regional NSW from 5pm tonight,” the state's Deputy Premier John Barilaro wrote on social media. The lockdown began at 5pm (07:00 GMT) and will last for at least seven days, according to the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/14/lockdown-fines-raised-as-australia-faces-worst-covid-situation>

To protect from lab leaks, we need ‘banal’ safety rules, not anti-terrorism measures

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The escape of SARS-CoV-2 from a research laboratory in Wuhan, China, continues to circulate as a viable and popular explanation for the pandemic's origin. But by accepting the lab-leak hypothesis, leaders may mistakenly seek new policy solutions or focus on tenuous yet alluring proposals about biosecurity, including high-tech means of enforcing restricted access. We believe that such actions would be ineffective and costly diversions from the core issue of institutionalizing existing and effective biohazard protocols. What should be done? Research institutions, funders, and principal investigators must prioritize and reward integrating standard biosafety measures into daily bench practices. Biosafety must become a core feature of good biological science, incorporated into funding, training, publishing, and promotion procedures. In short, biosafety habits need to be taken seriously.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/08/13/banal-lab-safety-rules-keep-us-safe/>

U.S. chimp sanctuary is poised to give its primates a COVID-19 vaccine—will others follow its lead?

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As the COVID-19 vaccine rollout has continued in the United States, a parallel vaccination effort has taken place in some U.S. zoos to protect their animals, particularly great apes. Now, a chimpanzee sanctuary in Georgia is ready to do the same, saying it intends to soon give an experimental COVID-19 vaccine to its primates, who are likely also vulnerable to the pandemic coronavirus. “Having consulted with our vet and several other zoo individuals, we’re confident that it’s the right decision for us,” says Ali Crumpacker, executive director of the Project Chimps sanctuary. Additional U.S. chimp sanctuaries tell Science they are discussing whether to vaccinate their animals and will watch others’ efforts closely. But some say they don’t see a pressing need to do so, given other precautions they have taken.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2021/08/us-chimp-sanctuary-poised-give-its-primates-covid-19-vaccine-will-others-follow-its>