

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

15th Oct 2021

One Minute Overview

Covid-19 Australia: Two of Australia's biggest banks to require their 75,000 staff to get Covid jab - Westpac and Commonwealth Bank to require 75,000 workers to get Covid-19 jab. [Employees need to be double-jabbed from December to return to the workplace. Westpac boss said the mandate is necessary to protect both staff and customers.](#) It comes after PwC told 8000 staff they need to get vaccinated against Covid-19

Verizon says 30000 U.S. employees must meet Dec. 8 vaccination deadline - Verizon Communications said on Thursday the majority of its U.S. workforce must show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 under President Joe Biden's federal contractor executive order. [Verizon said thousands of non-union U.S. employees must be fully vaccinated by Dec. 8 under the executive order.](#) Verizon, a federal contractor, said it was in discussions with its unions about vaccination requirements for 30,000 U.S. unionized employees.

Women left behind: gender gap emerges in Africa's vaccines - The health outreach workers who drove past Lama Mballow's village with a megaphone handed out T-shirts emblazoned with the words: "I GOT MY COVID-19 VACCINE!" By then, the women in Sare Gibel already had heard the rumors on social media: The vaccines could make your blood stop or cause you to miscarry. Women who took it wouldn't get pregnant again. [Lama Mballow and her sister-in-law, Fatoumata Mballow, never made the 3.4-mile trip \(5.5 kilometers\) to town for their vaccines, but the family kept the free shirt. Its lettering is now well-worn from washing,](#) but the women's resolve has not softened. They share much — meal preparation duties, child care, trips to the well with plastic jugs, and their outlook on the vaccine.

Moderna Booster Shot Backed by FDA Advisory Panel - Vaccine experts advising the Food and Drug Administration voted 19 to 0 [Thursday to recommend authorization of an extra dose of Moderna Inc.'s mRNA 3.23% Covid-19 shot, a key step in making booster doses available to millions more people.](#) A vaccine-advisory panel voted in favor of giving a Moderna booster shot at least six months after the second dose, to adults 65 years and older, as well as adults under 65 who are at high risk of severe Covid-19 or serious complications because of their jobs, living conditions or underlying medical conditions.

WHO says approval for Russia's Sputnik V vaccine 'still on hold' - The World Health Organization has said the Emergency Use Listing process for Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine was on hold pending some missing data and legal procedures, which the UN body hopes will be "sorted out quite soon". ["We are working almost on a daily basis with the ministry of health in Russia to address the remaining issues to be fulfilled by the Russian Direct Investment Fund," Mariangela Simao,](#) WHO assistant director-general for access to medicines and health products, said on Wednesday. Simao said that as soon as an agreement was reached, the WHO will reopen the case and assess data that was submitted, even though it was "still incomplete" and resume manufacturing site inspections in Russia. "All submissions that we have, they are addressed the same way," she said and did not specify a timeline for when the listing process could be completed.

Moderna criticized for COVID-19 vaccine strategy putting once feel-good success story in jeopardy - Since it was approved 10 months ago, the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine has enjoyed a

relatively unfettered run on its way to being considered one of the world's two elite shots. [But while COVID vaccine rival and pharmaceutical goliath Pfizer has faced a demanding spotlight, biotech Moderna has skipped along under the radar, avoiding scrutiny and gaining favor as a feel-good](#), success story. But that's starting to change. With evidence mounting that other vaccine producers have made their shots more readily available to poorer countries, the shine is wearing off the Boston-based company. And with Tuesday's revelation to the Associated Press that Moderna has no intention of sharing its mRNA vaccine formula with the rest of the world, the company has taken another public relations hit.

Hungary's daily COVID-19 cases rise above 1000 for first time during fourth wave of pandemic - Hungary reported 1,141 new COVID-19 infections on Thursday, with the number rising above 1,000 for the first time during the fourth wave of the pandemic, the government said. [The virus has infected 831,866 people in the country of 10 million so far and killed 30,341](#). Nearly 5.7 million people have been fully vaccinated in Hungary and 948,000 people have already received a third, booster shot as well.

Bayer, CureVac terminate COVID-19 shot production partnership - Bayer AG has terminated a vaccine manufacturing partnership under which it would have helped produce CureVac's COVID-19 shot, a spokesperson for Bayer told a German newspaper. [The news comes after CureVac earlier this week said it will give up on its first-generation COVID-19 vaccine candidate and instead focus on collaborating with GSK \(GSK.L\) to develop improved mRNA vaccine technology](#). 'Jointly with CureVac we have decided by mutual agreement to not continue the cooperation,' the Bayer spokesperson told Rheinische Post.

Covid-19: NHS facing exceptionally difficult winter - Chris Whitty - The NHS faces an 'exceptionally difficult' winter whether there is a Covid surge or not, England's chief medical officer Prof Chris Whitty says. [GPs in England are being told to see more patients face-to-face as ministers unveil a £250m winter rescue package](#). But the doctors' union says the package shows 'a government out of touch with the scale of the crisis.' The British Medical Association adds doctors will be 'horrified' by the idea the plan will save them when it could 'sink the ship altogether'

How do you vaccinate a small African nation? Rwanda's health minister explains - An outlier in Africa's slow rollout, [Rwanda has raced ahead and vaccinated more than 90 per cent of adults in its capital](#). Minister of Health Dr Daniel Ngamije tells the Evening Standard's Vaccine for the World project how Rwanda did it

France donates COVID-19 vaccine to Nigeria under COVAX scheme - Nigeria has received 501,600 doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine from the French government through the COVAX vaccine-sharing facility, a senior health official said on Thursday. [Faisal Shuaib, head of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, said the country also received 434,400 doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccine from the African Union](#). Both supplies were received last week, Shuaib said, adding that more were expected through the COVAX facility and the African Union.

Lockdown Exit

Coronavirus breakthrough: Stunned scientists discover uncommon antibody in 45-year old man that halts most Covid variants

Scientists were left stunned after they discovered a natural Covid antibody that seems to neutralise multiple Coronavirus variants. The 'potent' antibody was reportedly found in a 45-year old man who recovered from Covid-19 more than three months ago. One of the antibodies, labelled as '54042-4', seemed to be able to halt multiple mutations, including the Delta and Alpha variants. The researchers wrote in Cell Reports that the antibodies have 'uncommon genetic and structural characteristics' thereby setting themselves apart from others. They are now looking into developing

the antibody with the aim of protecting more people against a range of viruses.

<https://www.cityam.com/coronavirus-breakthrough-stunned-scientists-discover-uncommon-antibody-in-45-year-old-man-that-halts-multiple-covid-variants/>

Indonesia Covid: Slow start as Bali re-opens to foreign tourists

The much anticipated re-opening of Indonesia's famed tourist island Bali has seen a slow start, with no international flights scheduled. As of Thursday, fully vaccinated travellers from 19 countries including China, India, and France can enter Bali. The UK is not on the list. But visitors must first serve a five-day quarantine in a hotel. Officials had closed the international airport in April last year to stop the coronavirus from spreading. In July, Indonesia became the epicentre of Covid in Asia, but daily cases have since reduced significantly.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-58907525>

Australians can test themselves for Covid-19 at home in two weeks

Rapid antigen tests have been used extensively in countries around the world. They have finally been approved for use at home in Australia from November 1. States and territories will decide how residents can use the tests.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10090793/Australians-test-Covid-19-home-two-weeks.html>

Covid-19: NHS facing exceptionally difficult winter - Chris Whitty

The NHS faces an "exceptionally difficult" winter whether there is a Covid surge or not, England's chief medical officer Prof Chris Whitty says. GPs in England are being told to see more patients face-to-face as ministers unveil a £250m winter rescue package. But the doctors' union says the package shows "a government out of touch with the scale of the crisis." The British Medical Association adds doctors will be "horrified" by the idea the plan will save them when it could "sink the ship altogether".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-58908381>

Covid-19: More restrictions are relaxed in Northern Ireland

More relaxations to Northern Ireland's Covid-19 restrictions have taken effect. The decision by Stormont last week allows up to 30 people from an unlimited number of households to meet indoors at a private home. Audiences at indoor venues will also no longer have to stay seated during performances. Nightclubs are due to reopen on 31 October, with the end of indoor social distancing rules for hospitality. From then, the need to be socially distanced will also move to guidance, with people asked to minimise face-to-face contact.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-58902318>

Bayer, CureVac terminate COVID-19 shot production partnership

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<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/bayer-curevac-terminate-covid-19-shot-production-partnership-2021-10-15/>

Italy: Fresh pandemic woes for those jabbed with 'wrong' vaccines

When Duccio Armenise, an Italian, decided to get vaccinated against COVID-19 in Russia, the only jab he could receive was Sputnik. "We were in the middle of an outbreak, and I had seen what COVID had done to a few friends, so I was really scared," he told Al Jazeera. "I didn't want to face COVID without antibodies, so I got the shots." He expected some problems once he returned to Italy, since Sputnik was not in use in the European Union, "but I was confident that by the time I came

back they would be solved.” But months later, Sputnik is yet to receive approval from the World Health Organization (WHO), it is still being evaluated by the European Union, and Italy will not hand out a Green Pass to anyone who got the Russian shot.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/14/italys-covid-green-pass-leaves-some-stuck-in-vaccine-limbo>

Exit Strategies

Covid-19 Vaccine-Mandate Bans Tread on Uncertain Legal Ground

State-imposed bans on Covid-19 vaccine mandates have set up a potential legal clash with the federal government as the Biden administration rolls out a requirement that large companies make sure their employees get inoculated. In Texas and Montana, employers are scrambling to understand the consequences of state orders restricting employers from requiring their workers to be vaccinated against Covid-19. At the same time, they are awaiting rules from the federal government that will mandate shots for millions of American workers—an order from President Biden that is also likely to face lawsuits, casting more uncertainty over the final outcome.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-vaccine-mandate-bans-tread-on-uncertain-legal-ground-11634219328>

Verizon says 30000 U.S. employees must meet Dec. 8 vaccination deadline

Verizon Communications said on Thursday the majority of its U.S. workforce must show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 under President Joe Biden's federal contractor executive order. Verizon said thousands of non-union U.S. employees must be fully vaccinated by Dec. 8 under the executive order. Verizon, a federal contractor, said it was in discussions with its unions about vaccination requirements for 30,000 U.S. unionized employees.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/verizon-says-30000-us-employees-must-meet-dec-8-vaccination-deadline-2021-10-14/>

U.S. donates 17 million J&J doses to African Union

President Joe Biden told visiting Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta on Thursday that the United States will make a one-time donation of more than 17 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to the African Union, the White House said. The meeting with Kenyatta at the White House marked Biden's first as president with an African leader. Kenya holds the rotating presidency of the U.N. Security Council this month. The United States and Kenya have long cooperated on economic and security initiatives including counterterrorism.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/us-donates-17-million-jj-doses-african-union-2021-10-14/>

France donates COVID-19 vaccine to Nigeria under COVAX scheme

Nigeria has received 501,600 doses of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine from the French government through the COVAX vaccine-sharing facility, a senior health official said on Thursday. Faisal Shuaib, head of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, said the country also received 434,400 doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccine from the African Union. Both supplies were received last week, Shuaib said, adding that more were expected through the COVAX facility and the African Union.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/france-donates-covid-19-vaccine-nigeria-under-covax-scheme-2021-10-14/>

U.S. to ship 2.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to Pakistan

The U.S. government will ship 2.4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to Pakistan on Thursday, bringing the total number of doses sent to the South Asian country to about 18.3 million, more than any other country, a White House official said. The latest shipments of the vaccine lots made by Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech are due to arrive on Saturday via the COVAX distribution program, said the official, who asked to remain unidentified.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-ship-24-million-doses-covid-19-vaccine-pakistan-2021-10-14/>

How do you vaccinate a small African nation? Rwanda's health minister explains

An outlier in Africa's slow rollout, Rwanda has raced ahead and vaccinated more than 90 per cent of adults in its capital. Minister of Health Dr Daniel Ngamije tells the Evening Standard's Vaccine for the World project how Rwanda did it

<https://www.standard.co.uk/optimist/vaccine-world/how-did-rwanda-vaccinate-quickly-rwanda-daniel-ngamije-covid-b960485.html>

Hospitals weigh COVID vaccine mandates for patients in need of lifesaving organ transplants

The recent uproar over a hospital requiring a Colorado woman to get a coronavirus vaccine before being considered for an organ transplant reveals the kind of decisions transplant centers make every day. Hospitals that transplant hearts, livers, lungs or other organs have strict requirements and prioritize patients based on a range of factors, including medical need, suitability and likelihood of success. "Organs are a scarce resource," said Deepali Kumar, president-elect of the American Society of Transplantation. "We have a duty to make sure that gift is protected and also that our patients have the best possible outcomes."

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2021/10/14/some-patients-need-covid-shot-get-lifesaving-organ-transplants/8435298002/>

Queensland cops take police to court over Covid vaccine mandates

Queensland Police have been told by their commissioner to get Covid vaccine But 50 furious staff members are taking the fight to court and refuse to get vax Dozens of officers have already been suspended after not getting vaccinated Mandatory vaccination is becoming an increasingly controversial issue In NSW, people must be double-jabbed just to go to shops or the pub

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10091293/Queensland-cops-police-court-Covid-vaccine-mandates.html>

Covid vaccines for US children are coming but challenge will be persuading parents

Covid vaccines for children aged five to 11 are inching closer to authorization in the US, with possible availability as soon as early November, and experts are already looking to the next hurdle: actually getting the shots in those young arms. Only one-third of parents plan to vaccinate their children as soon as the vaccines are ready, the non-partisan Kaiser Family Foundation has found. Another third of those surveyed want to wait and see how the rollout goes. "What's going to be actually more challenging, beyond having the infrastructure to be able to administer the Covid-19 vaccines, is ensuring that parents feel comfortable vaccinating their children," Syra Madad, an infectious disease epidemiologist and senior director of the System-wide Special Pathogens Program at NYC Health + Hospitals, told the Guardian. About half of children 12 and older have been vaccinated in the months since the vaccines were given the green light for those ages.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/14/covid-vaccines-children-persuading-parents>

Coronavirus: Unions call for improved vaccine rollout

A global coalition of more than 350 trade unions is renewing calls for politicians to waive the patents on Covid vaccines. They say that failing to do so would compound supply chain crises and inflict "economic self-harm". It comes as the World Trade Organization (WTO) tries to broker a compromise at a meeting in Geneva. Critics argue that accelerating the rollout of vaccines is more complex than just the waiving of patents. The dilemma being discussed at the WTO meeting centres on finding the best way to ensure the most widespread and equitable way of vaccinating the whole world from coronavirus and ending the pandemic. Successfully doing so would allow the removal of restrictions that have impaired economic growth.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-58906765>

Covid-19 Australia: Two of Australia's biggest banks to require their 75,000 staff to get Covid jab

Westpac and Commonwealth Bank to require 75,000 workers to get Covid-19 jab Employees need to be double-jabbed from December to return to the workplace Westpac boss said the mandate is necessary to protect both staff and customers It comes after PwC told 8000 staff they need to get vaccinated against Covid-19

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10090337/Covid-19-Australia-Two-Australias-biggest-banks-require-75-000-staff-jab.html>

Nigeria orders civil servants to show COVID-19 vaccination or negative test from Dec 1

Nigeria will require civil servants to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 or a negative test for the disease to gain access to their offices from the beginning of December, a presidential committee said on Wednesday. The presidential committee said unvaccinated government workers will need to present a negative test result done within 72-hours before they are granted access to their offices across the country and its embassies abroad. "An appropriate service wide advisory/circular will be issued to guide the process," Boss Mustapha, chairman of the presidential steering committee on COVID-19, said in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigeria-orders-civil-servants-show-covid-19-vaccination-or-negative-test-dec-1-2021-10-13/>

Ireland may not drop all COVID-19 restrictions next week, ministers say

Ireland raised doubts over its plans to drop almost all COVID-19 restrictions next week due to a rise in cases, with Finance Minister Paschal Donohoe saying a full return of office workers was now unlikely. Ireland has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world with 92% of adults fully protected but also one of the highest infection rates in Europe with around 400 cases per 100,000 people in the past 14 days. With hospitalisations ticking up, though still far below peaks this year and last, ministers will discuss at a cabinet meeting on Tuesday whether this will push up critical care needs ahead of the busy winter period.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ireland-may-not-drop-all-covid-19-restrictions-next-week-ministers-say-2021-10-14/>

Melbourne set for COVID lockdown exit despite record cases as vaccinations spike

Melbourne will exit months of COVID-19 lockdown next week helped by a faster-than-expected vaccine uptake, Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews said on Thursday, ahead of schedule even though daily infections hit a record the same day. In the worst day of an outbreak of the Delta variant coronavirus that began in early August, Victoria logged 2,297 new cases on Thursday, up from 1,571 the day before and the highest for any Australian state or territory since the pandemic began. Eleven people died, bringing the total toll in the latest outbreak to 125.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/covid-19-cases-australias-victoria-hit-record-daily-high-2021-10-13/>

Maori leader in New Zealand blasts country's new COVID-19 strategy

The co-leader of New Zealand's Maori Party, Debbie Ngarewa-Packer, says the country's new COVID-19 strategy amounts to a "death warrant" for Indigenous communities. Earlier in October, the country announced it is easing coronavirus restrictions in the largest city of Auckland. The decision was widely seen as moving away from a zero-tolerance approach to the pandemic, where a single coronavirus infection could trigger severe restrictions on public life. To date, only 28 New Zealanders are confirmed to have died of COVID-19.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/10/13/1045320600/maori-leader-calls-new-zealands-covid-19-strategy-a-death-warrant-for-her-people>

Partisan Exits

Anti-vaxxers paying \$500 for fake Australian Covid vaccine passports that work to enter venues

More than a dozen accounts selling fake vaccine passports set up on Telegram One website is offering counterfeit Australian government documents for \$500 Sources have told Daily Mail Australia they are aware of them working in Sydney A woman said her colleague was using one to successfully enter businesses The reports comes as Victoria and ACT prepare to reopen as they hit job targets

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10089749/Anti-vaxxers-paying-500-fake-Australian-Covid-vaccine-passports-work-enter-venues.html>

U.S. pastors, advocacy groups mobilize against COVID-19 vaccine mandates

From the outside, First Harvest Ministries in Waveland, Mississippi, could almost be mistaken for a storage shed were it not for the steeple. From the modest building however, Shane Vaughn, the Pentecostal church's pastor, has helped spearhead an online movement promoting personal faith as a way around workplace COVID-19 vaccine mandates. He posts form letters for U.S. workers seeking religious exemptions that have been downloaded from his website around 40,000 times, according to a screen shot of web traffic he shared with Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-pastors-advocacy-groups-mobilize-against-covid-19-vaccine-mandates-2021-10-14/>

Gambian women's voices on COVID-19 vaccines: "We are afraid"

Oyster harvesting in Gambia is considered women's work. It's a grueling task — they paddle rickety boats, then get into water up to their necks to lay nets. Many of the women are the sole family breadwinners, and that burden has only intensified with the pandemic's economic hardships. Oysters bring income just two months a year — the rest of year, the nets catch crabs and small fish. The TRY Oyster Women's Association represents more than 500 women, many of whom are reluctant to get vaccinated against COVID-19. These women fish under darkness of night without fear but are anxious about the vaccine. They say they can't miss a day of work if it means being sidelined — even briefly— because of side effects from the jab.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people-africa-melinda-gates-foundation-b1938168.html>

Covid-19 in Brazil: 'My mum was used as a guinea pig'

A Brazilian healthcare provider is accused of giving unproven drugs to Covid-19 patients and conducting experiments on elderly people without their relatives' consent. The allegations have been linked to deaths that, families say, could have been prevented. Katia Castilho's grief keeps her awake at night. In March, Norberto, her father, was admitted to a public hospital in São Paulo with Covid-19. Brazil, which has been hit hard by the pandemic, was then at the height of its second wave, with daily deaths numbering 4,000.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-58891004>

Women left behind: gender gap emerges in Africa's vaccines

The health outreach workers who drove past Lama Mballow's village with a megaphone handed out T-shirts emblazoned with the words: "I GOT MY COVID-19 VACCINE!" By then, the women in Sare Gibel already had heard the rumors on social media: The vaccines could make your blood stop or cause you to miscarry. Women who took it wouldn't get pregnant again. Lama Mballow and her sister-in-law, Fatoumata Mballow, never made the 3.4-mile trip (5.5 kilometers) to town for their vaccines, but the family kept the free shirt. Its lettering is now well-worn from washing, but the women's resolve has not softened. They share much — meal preparation duties, child care, trips to the well with plastic jugs, and their outlook on the vaccine.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-lifestyle-europe-philanthropy-31fd688936caec29ff082412ef23e30a>

How to Deal With an Anti-Vaxxer at a Holiday Dinner

So at a holiday gathering, plan a collaborative activity, like a puzzle, or Legos, or prepping dinner.

Then get people telling stories—about how they made big life decisions, about lessons from loved ones they never forgot. Personal stories, personal truths—that’s how you coax out their values. You allow people to build bridges to their better selves. You’ll return to those values to find common ground and make your case. You persuade them by reminding them of the trust you’ve built and the values you share.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-14/how-to-talk-to-anti-vax-family-members-this-holiday?srnd=premium-europe>

Scientific Viewpoint

Moderna Booster Shot Backed by FDA Advisory Panel

Vaccine experts advising the Food and Drug Administration voted 19 to 0 Thursday to recommend authorization of an extra dose of Moderna Inc.’s mRNA 3.23% Covid-19 shot, a key step in making booster doses available to millions more people. A vaccine-advisory panel voted in favor of giving a Moderna booster shot at least six months after the second dose, to adults 65 years and older, as well as adults under 65 who are at high risk of severe Covid-19 or serious complications because of their jobs, living conditions or underlying medical conditions.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/fda-advisors-to-consider-moderna-covid-19-booster-shot-11634211532>

FDA Panel Backs Moderna Booster for Older, High-Risk People

Booster shots of Moderna Inc.’s Covid-19 vaccine should be given to older people and those at high risk of the disease, advisers to U.S. regulators said. Additional doses of the two-shot messenger RNA vaccine should be offered to people 65 and older, along with adults 18 and older who are at high risk for medical or occupational reasons, the Food and Drug Administration’s vaccine advisory panel said Thursday in a unanimous, 19-0 vote. The booster, which is half the original dose, should be given at least six months after the initial inoculation, the panel said. Moderna shares gained as much as 4.9% in Thursday afternoon trading in New York.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-10-14/fda-panel-backs-moderna-booster-for-older-high-risk-people>

FDA advisers back Moderna COVID-19 booster shots for older and high-risk people

A panel of expert advisers to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration unanimously voted on Thursday to recommend booster shots of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine for Americans aged 65 and older and those at high risk of severe illness or occupational exposure to the virus. If the FDA signs off on Moderna's booster, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will make specific recommendations on who should get the shots. CDC advisers are scheduled to meet next week.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-fda-advisers-weigh-case-covid-19-vaccine-booster-shots-2021-10-14/>

FDA vaccine advisers are meeting to consider Moderna Covid-19 vaccine boosters

Vaccine advisers to the US Food and Drug Administration voted unanimously Thursday to recommend emergency use authorization of a booster dose of Moderna's Covid-19 vaccine. The FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee agreed use of a booster dose would be safe and effective in some people six months out from their primary series. But some were clearly reluctant. Moderna had asked for emergency use authorization for a half dose of its vaccine to be used as a booster for certain people.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/14/health/fda-vaccine-advisers-moderna-thursday/index.html>

Hungary will receive technology to produce Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine -foreign minister

Hungary will receive technology this year to produce Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine at a Hungarian plant currently under construction, Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said in Moscow on Thursday according to a foreign ministry statement. This would be the first concrete step towards making the vaccine in the European Union, even though it is not yet approved in the bloc. The

Sputnik V vaccine, widely used in Russia and approved for use in more than 70 countries, is still undergoing a review by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Medicines Agency.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungary-will-this-year-receive-technology-produce-sputnik-v-covid-19-vaccine-2021-10-14/>

J&J COVID-19 shot gets better boost from Moderna or Pfizer in NIH study

People who got Johnson & Johnson Inc's COVID-19 vaccine as a first shot had a stronger immune response when boosted with vaccines from Pfizer Inc/BioNTech SE or Moderna Inc, a study run by the National Institutes of Health showed on Wednesday. The study, which is preliminary and hasn't been peer reviewed, is the latest challenge to J&J's efforts to use its COVID-19 vaccine as a booster in the United States. The study, which included more than 450 adults who received initial shots from Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson, showed that "mixing and matching" booster shots of different types is safe in adults. Moderna's and Pfizer's vaccines are based on messenger RNA while J&J's uses viral vector technology.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/mixing-covid-19-booster-shots-safe-says-nih-study-2021-10-13/>

EU starts real-time review of AstraZeneca COVID-19 antibody cocktail

Europe's drug regulator said on Thursday it had started a real-time review of AstraZeneca's antibody-based COVID-19 therapy, the first protective shot other than vaccines against coronavirus. The decision by the human medicines committee of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to begin the rolling review was based on early results from clinical studies, the regulator said. It did not say when a conclusion was expected. The move to start a real-time review, so called because data is evaluated as it is made available, came roughly a week after the Anglo-Swedish drugmaker sought emergency approval from U.S. authorities.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-begins-real-time-review-astrazeneca-covid-19-antibody-cocktail-2021-10-14/>

COVID-19: New WHO team may be 'last chance' to understand origins of coronavirus

A newly formed World Health Organisation (WHO) team may be "our last chance" to understand the origins of coronavirus, the body's top emergency expert has said. The WHO has named 26 proposed members of its Scientific Advisory Group on the Origins of Novel Pathogens (SAGO), to determine the origins of coronavirus. Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO technical lead on COVID-19, said she hoped there would be further WHO-led international missions to China to encourage the country to cooperate.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-new-who-team-may-be-last-chance-to-understand-origins-of-coronavirus-12433322>

What's the latest advice on the type of mask I should wear?

What's the latest advice on the type of mask I should wear? It depends on your situation, but health officials say it should cover your nose and mouth, and fit snugly so there aren't any gaps on the sides of your face. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also says to pick masks with two or more layers and a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out the top. It suggests holding your mask up to check if it blocks light, which means the fabric will probably filter out more particles. If you want added protection, experts also suggest wearing two masks or pairing them with a mask fitter to ensure they don't leave any gaps.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-lifestyle-health-0033db2d289338e726d80ad4e4f7d750>

China warns against 'manipulation' of WHO virus probe

China's Foreign Ministry on Thursday warned against what it called possible "political manipulation" of a renewed probe by the World Health Organization into the origins of the coronavirus, while saying it would support the international body's efforts. The WHO on Wednesday released a

proposed list of 25 experts to advise it on next steps in the search for the virus' origins after its earlier efforts were attacked for going too easy on China, where the first human cases were detected in late 2019. Beijing was accused of withholding raw data on early cases during a visit by a WHO team in February and has since resisted calls for further investigation, saying the U.S. and others were politicizing the matter.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-united-nations-world-health-organization-beijing-china-8d164e8e474f99a5825ce8ed30ca5bc8>

COMMENTARY: What can masks do? Part 1: The science behind COVID-19 protection

Confusion continues to abound over the effectiveness of masks to protect people from COVID-19, and recent news stories touting imperfect studies are only compounding the situation. First, there was confusion and then intransigence about the modes of transmission, with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) insisting for many months after SARS-CoV-2 emerged that the virus was transmitted only by large droplets or hand contact. Only fairly recently did those agencies finally recognize that inhalation of small infectious particles in the air ("aerosols") is a more important mode of transmission. That was followed by substantial misinformation and misunderstanding about the role of cloth face coverings, surgical masks, and respirators in preventing SARS-CoV-2 spread. Then we had misunderstandings and poor messaging about the efficacy of different interventions, the effectiveness of one intervention versus another, and why interventions should be considered in a particular order or hierarchy.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/10/commentary-what-can-masks-do-part-1-science-behind-covid-19-protection>

The hidden cost of Covid-19: years of life lost among the young

Body counts appear to support the common perception that Covid-19 does its worst damage among the old and vulnerable. But body counts mask another reality, and focusing on them is skewing policy decisions and individual choices. There's no question that deaths were most common among old and vulnerable individuals early in the pandemic. Some politicians and academics have used death rates to conclude that the pandemic's toll has been largely confined to the elderly and sick, and that widespread mitigation measures such as mask and vaccine mandates are unjustified. We looked at Covid-related deaths through a different lens — years of life lost — which revealed a very different picture about the burden of illness than deaths alone.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/10/14/years-of-life-lost-among-the-young-hidden-cost-covid-19/>

Tracking the FDA advisory panel meeting on Moderna's Covid vaccine booster

With people who received the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine already in the process of getting booster shots, attention is shifting this week to what to do with people who received one of the two other vaccines in use in the U.S., the two-dose Moderna vaccine and the one-shot Johnson & Johnson product. Members of the Food and Drug Administration's vaccine expert panel, the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC), are meeting today to discuss Moderna's application for a booster shot for its product and again Friday to discuss the J&J application. The Biden administration has made it clear that it wants to boost all Americans who have been vaccinated, suggesting they should receive an additional jab six months or later after the last dose in their original vaccine regimen. Though the World Health Organization has asked wealthy countries to hold off on using boosters to make more vaccine available to low-income countries, and some experts have argued most people don't currently need boosters, the administration has been unswerving on this policy.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/10/14/fda-advisory-panel-meeting-moderna-covid-vaccine-booster/>

WHO says approval for Russia's Sputnik V vaccine 'still on hold'

The World Health Organization has said the Emergency Use Listing process for Russia's Sputnik V

COVID-19 vaccine was on hold pending some missing data and legal procedures, which the UN body hopes will be “sorted out quite soon”. “We are working almost on a daily basis with the ministry of health in Russia to address the remaining issues to be fulfilled by the Russian Direct Investment Fund,” Mariangela Simao, WHO assistant director-general for access to medicines and health products, said on Wednesday. Simao said that as soon as an agreement was reached, the WHO will reopen the case and assess data that was submitted, even though it was “still incomplete” and resume manufacturing site inspections in Russia. “All submissions that we have, they are addressed the same way,” she said and did not specify a timeline for when the listing process could be completed.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/13/who-says-approval-for-russias-sputnik-v-vaccine-still-on-hold>

Most COVID-19 survivors have symptoms 6 months on, review finds

A systematic review of 57 studies involving more than 250,000 COVID-19 survivors reveals that 54% still had at least one symptom 6 months or more after initial diagnosis or release from the hospital. In the review, published today in JAMA Network Open, a team led by Hershey (Pennsylvania) Medical Center researchers searched the literature from December 2019 through March 2021 for studies on persistent COVID-19-related symptoms diagnosed using lab results, radiologic findings, or clinical signs or symptoms at or after 1 month.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/10/most-covid-19-survivors-have-symptoms-6-months-review-finds>

Moderna criticized for COVID-19 vaccine strategy putting once feel-good success story in jeopardy

Since it was approved 10 months ago, the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine has enjoyed a relatively unfettered run on its way to being considered one of the world’s two elite shots. But while COVID vaccine rival and pharmaceutical goliath Pfizer has faced a demanding spotlight, biotech Moderna has skipped along under the radar, avoiding scrutiny and gaining favor as a feel-good, success story. But that’s starting to change. With evidence mounting that other vaccine producers have made their shots more readily available to poorer countries, the shine is wearing off the Boston-based company. And with Tuesday’s revelation to the Associated Press that Moderna has no intention of sharing its mRNA vaccine formula with the rest of the world, the company has taken another public relations hit.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/once-a-feel-good-story-moderna-now-facing-criticism-for-covid-19-vaccine-strategy>

Coronavirus Resurgence

CDC predicts continued declines in Covid-19 hospitalizations and deaths over next 4 weeks

Covid-19 deaths and hospitalizations are expected to decline over the next four weeks, according to ensemble forecasts from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published Wednesday. The latest forecast predicts 740,000 to 762,000 reported deaths by November 6. It's third consecutive week of a projected decrease in newly reported deaths. There have been more than 717,000 Covid-19 deaths in the US, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/13/health/us-coronavirus-wednesday/index.html>

Covid-19 infections are declining in the US. But hospitalizations are still high in some hotspots

While the rate of Covid-19 infections nationwide is slowing, health care systems in some parts of the country are struggling with hospital wings still packed with patients. Montana, for instance, is facing new highs this week in coronavirus hospitalizations, with 533 Covid-19 patients in hospitals as of Wednesday, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services. This eclipses the high

set in November, before vaccines were readily available, according to HHS and data from the Covid Tracking Project. The percentages of ICU beds used for Covid-19 patients in Montana, along with neighboring Idaho and Wyoming, are among the highest in the country, HHS data showed.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/14/health/us-coronavirus-thursday/index.html>

Russia's daily COVID-19 cases, deaths surge to record highs

Russia called on pension-age doctors who quit during the pandemic for safety reasons to return to their jobs on Thursday as the authorities reported a record one-day tally of COVID-19 cases as well as a record number of deaths. The Kremlin has blamed the rising toll on Russia's slow vaccination campaign and has appealed to people to get the shot. Take-up has been slow, with many Russians citing distrust of the authorities and fear of new medical products. "In a situation where infections are growing, it is necessary to continue to explain to people that they must get vaccinated," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-daily-covid-19-deaths-cases-surge-record-highs-2021-10-14/>

Hungary's daily COVID-19 cases rise above 1000 for first time during fourth wave of pandemic

Hungary reported 1,141 new COVID-19 infections on Thursday, with the number rising above 1,000 for the first time during the fourth wave of the pandemic, the government said. The virus has infected 831,866 people in the country of 10 million so far and killed 30,341. Nearly 5.7 million people have been fully vaccinated in Hungary and 948,000 people have already received a third, booster shot as well.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungarys-daily-covid-19-cases-rise-above-1000-first-time-during-fourth-wave-2021-10-14/>

COVID-19 cases surge among children after schools reopen - but drop among adults

Coronavirus infections among children increased in England last month after schools reopened, a study has found. The surge kept overall cases high even as COVID-19's prevalence among adults fell, the research showed. The epidemic was estimated to be growing among those under 17, with an R number estimated at 1.18, according to the REACT-1 study led by Imperial College London.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-cases-surge-among-children-after-schools-reopen-but-drop-among-adults-12433304>

Britain's COVID-19 situation stable - health minister

Britain's defences against COVID-19 are working and the pandemic situation is currently stable, health minister Sajid Javid said on Thursday. "Overall things feel quite stable at this point. The numbers are a bit up, a bit down over the last few weeks," he told Times Radio. "Our primary defences against this virus are working." Britain reported 42,776 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, the highest number since mid-July, and 136 more deaths within 28 days of a positive test, official data showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britains-covid-19-situation-stable-health-minister-2021-10-14/>

COVID-19 cases in Australia's Victoria hit record daily high

Melbourne will exit months of COVID-19 lockdown next week helped by a faster-than-expected vaccine uptake, Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews said on Thursday, ahead of schedule even though daily infections hit a record the same day. In the worst day of an outbreak of the Delta variant coronavirus that began in early August, Victoria logged 2,297 new cases on Thursday, up from 1,571 the day before and the highest for any Australian state or territory since the pandemic began. Eleven people died, bringing the total toll in the latest outbreak to 125. But the surge comes as Victoria also nears the 70% threshold for double-dose vaccination among eligible adults - the level at which authorities have promised to end strict stay-home restrictions. That target was originally expected to be met on Oct. 26, and the vaccination level was 62% as of Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/covid-19-cases-in-australias-victoria-hit-record-daily-high-idUSKBN2H32GM>

New Zealand reports biggest rise in COVID-19 cases in six weeks

New Zealand reported on Thursday its biggest rise in COVID-19 infections in six weeks, with all cases detected in Auckland, raising prospects of a further extension of lockdown restrictions in the country's largest city beyond next week. Some 1.7 million people in Auckland are under strict stay-home orders until Monday as officials look to stamp out the highly infectious Delta outbreak, the first major spate of community cases in the country since early in the pandemic. Deputy Prime Minister Grant Robertson said the surge in case numbers in Auckland was not unexpected "but they are rising more quickly," and blamed illegal home gatherings for the spike.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-reports-biggest-rise-covid-19-cases-six-weeks-2021-10-14/>