

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 5th Nov 2021

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Biden's Vaccine Mandate Means Millions of Workers Must Get Shots by Jan. 4 or Test Weekly**

Many employers will have to ensure by Jan. 4 that their workers are vaccinated or tested weekly for Covid-19 under a set of new vaccine requirements. by the Biden administration that will cover more than 80 million employees. The requirements released Thursday by the Labor Department implement a vaccine directive that President Biden announced in September. They apply to employers with 100 or more employees. While the administration has said the requirements are necessary to curb the Covid-19 pandemic, they have drawn opposition from many Republicans.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/employer-covid-19-vaccine-and-testing-rules-unveiled-by-biden-administration-11636029900>

#### **Inside the World's Most Blatant Covid-19 Coverup: Secret Burials, a Dead President**

Last year, President John Magufuli declared the virus a "satanic myth" propagated by imperialist powers. While his neighbors sealed borders and locked down, his country of 58 million stayed open. His government barred doctors from registering coronavirus as the cause of death and labeled those who wore masks unpatriotic. Seeking to keep the economy open and rally nationalist sentiment ahead of elections, he blocked foreign journalists from entering the country, rejected vaccines and refused to provide data to the World Health Organization. News organizations reporting on Covid-19 were shut down for "scaremongering," and reporters threatened with jail. By this spring, the president was dead, along with six other senior politicians and several of the country's generals. The official cause of Mr. Magufuli's death was heart failure. The details remain secret. Diplomats, analysts and opposition leaders say he had Covid-19.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-coronavirus-coverup-tanzania-11636042309>

#### **Philippines Eases Virus Restrictions in Manila Capital Region**

The Philippines will ease coronavirus restrictions in the Manila capital region from Friday until Nov. 21 as infections eased. The Southeast Asian nation's virus task force decided to place the capital -- which accounts for a third of economic output -- under Alert Level 2 where businesses can operate at higher capacities, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a statement late Thursday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-04/philippines-eases-virus-restrictions-in-manila-capital-region>

#### **Europe Is Covid Epicenter Once Again As Cases Surge, WHO Says**

The World Health Organization warned that a surge of coronavirus cases in Europe and Central Asia has pushed the region back as the epicenter of the pandemic. There are now 78 million cases in the European region, which is more than infections reported in Southeast Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Western Pacific and Africa combined, according to the WHO. Last week, Europe and Central Asia accounted for almost half of the world's reported deaths from Covid-19. The outbreak has accelerating in Europe over the last four weeks as colder temperatures lead to more socializing indoors, while many countries have eased restrictions. The WHO has repeatedly said that the pandemic is not yet over, and that governments should keep public-health measures such as mask-wearing along with vaccinations.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-04/europe-is-covid-epicenter-once-again-amid-case-surge-who-says>

### **New York City, union reach agreement on vaccine mandate**

New York City's public-sector employee union District Council 37 and the administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio on Thursday reached an agreement on a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for over 55,000 city workers. District Council 37 members who have not provided proof of at least one dose of the vaccine will have the option to resign or take a leave of absence and in both cases, employees will maintain their health benefits, the union said in a statement. Employees without proof of vaccination who have either not submitted an application for an exemption or who have been denied an exemption may be placed on unpaid leave beginning Nov. 1 through Nov. 30, the union said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/new-york-city-union-reaches-agreement-vaccine-mandate-with-nyc-administration-2021-11-04/>

### **Chile's campaign trail goes virtual as all but two candidates forced into COVID lockdown**

Chile's presidential candidates had to host news conferences from home and cancel travel plans on Thursday as five out of seven candidates were forced to isolate for a week after left-wing hopeful Gabriel Boric tested positive for COVID-19. In addition to Boric, four candidates had all been in close contact with him recently and have since tested negative for the virus, they said on social media. But Chile's regulations mandate that any close contacts isolate for at least seven days regardless of test result.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/chiles-campaign-trail-goes-virtual-all-two-candidates-forced-into-covid-lockdown-2021-11-04/>

### **COVID cases break records across Europe as winter takes hold**

Coronavirus infections are hitting record levels in many countries across Europe as winter takes hold, prompting a call for action from the World Health Organization which described the new wave as a "grave concern". Soaring numbers of cases, especially in Eastern Europe, have prompted debate on whether to reintroduce curbs on movement before the Christmas holiday season and on how to persuade more people to get vaccinated. That conversation comes as some countries in Asia, with the notable exception of China, reopen their tourism sectors to the rest of the world

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/covid-cases-break-records-across-europe-winter-takes-hold-2021-11-04/>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Pharmalittle: Moderna sees \$18 billion in Covid vaccine sales despite production woes; U.K. clears Merck Covid pill**

Moderna cut its full-year sales forecast for its Covid-19 vaccine to between \$15 billion and \$18 billion from \$20 billion estimated previously, as the vaccine maker struggles with the production of its two-dose inoculation, Reuters notes. The company is now expecting deliveries of between 700 million and 800 million doses this year, down from its prior expectations of between 800 million and 1 billion doses. The Covid-19 vaccine is now expected to generate between \$15 billion and \$18 billion in sales this year. That estimate was lowered because fewer doses are now set to be delivered this year.

<https://www.statnews.com/pharmalot/2021/11/04/covid19-vaccine-moderna-merck-roche-novartis/>

### **How Tyson Foods Got 60,500 Workers to Get the Coronavirus Vaccine Quickly**

When Tyson, one of the world's largest meatpacking companies, announced in early August that all of its 120,000 workers would need to be vaccinated against the coronavirus or lose their jobs, Diana Eike was angry. Ms. Eike, an administrative coordinator at the company, had resisted the vaccine, and not for religious or political reasons like many others here in her home state. "It was just something personal," she said. Now, Ms. Eike is fully vaccinated, and she is relieved that Tyson made the decision for her. The company, she said, "took the burden off of me making the choice."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/business/tyson-vaccine-mandate.html>

### **First elementary school-age kids receive coronavirus vaccine**

Hugs with friends. Birthday parties indoors. Pillow fights. Kids who got their first coronavirus shots Wednesday said these are the pleasures they look forward to as the United States enters a major new phase in fighting the pandemic. Health officials hailed shots for kids ages 5 to 11 as a major breakthrough after more than 18 months of illness, hospitalizations, deaths and disrupted education. Kid-size doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine cleared two final hurdles Tuesday — a recommendation from CDC advisers, followed by a green light from Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost/kids-get-coronavirus-vaccine/2021/11/04/ac65ea26-3d25-11ec-a493-51b0252dea0c\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost/kids-get-coronavirus-vaccine/2021/11/04/ac65ea26-3d25-11ec-a493-51b0252dea0c_story.html)

### **Some parents eager, others unsure as COVID-19 shot approved for kids**

As soon as Anna Weber Kneitel learned San Francisco Bay Area pharmacies had opened appointments for COVID-19 vaccines for young children, she booked the closest one she could find for her 7-year-old son. But across the country in Michigan, Rachael LaPlante said she was planning to hold off on getting the shots for her 7-year-old son, despite being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 herself. After months of anticipation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday gave the green light for health professionals to start administering the Pfizer Inc, BioNTech SE shot to children ages 5 to 11.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/some-parents-eager-others-unsure-covid-19-shot-approved-kids-2021-11-03/>

### **Turkey to start booster shots for Pfizer COVID vaccine recipients -minister**

Turkey will begin administering boosters to people who have received two shots of the Pfizer Inc/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said on Wednesday. Turkey has already administered a third dose to more than 11.2 million people who received two doses of the vaccine developed by China's Sinovac, whose efficacy rate officials believe falls faster. In a statement after meeting with his science council, Koca said the booster shots for Pfizer/BioNTech recipients would begin on Thursday with the elderly, those with chronic illnesses, health workers and those in other high-risk jobs.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-start-booster-shots-pfizer-covid-vaccine-recipients-minister-2021-11-03/>

### **New U.S. COVID testing/vaccine rule excludes outdoor workers**

A new U.S. workplace rule that requires tens of millions of Americans to get vaccinated for COVID-19 or submit to weekly testing will exclude employees who work exclusively outdoors, according to regulatory filing by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. An estimated 2.4 million healthcare workers will need to be vaccinated or replaced under a related rule issued by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/new-us-covid-testingvaccine-rule-excludes-outdoor-workers-2021-11-04/>

### **Vienna bans the unvaccinated from restaurants as national cases surge**

The City of Vienna said on Thursday it is banning people not vaccinated against COVID-19 from cafes, restaurants and events with more than 25 people, pre-empting measures that are likely to be introduced across Austria soon as infections are surging. Roughly 64% of Austria's population is fully vaccinated against the coronavirus. That matches the European Union average but is also among the lowest rates in western Europe. Many Austrians are sceptical about vaccines, a view encouraged by the far-right Freedom Party, the third biggest in parliament.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/austrian-coronavirus-cases-surge-lockdown-vaccine-holdouts-looms-2021-11-04/>

### **US mandates vaccines or tests for big companies by Jan. 4**

Tens of millions of Americans who work at companies with 100 or more employees will need to be

fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by Jan. 4 or get tested for the virus weekly under government rules issued Thursday. The new requirements are the Biden administration's boldest move yet to persuade reluctant Americans to finally get a vaccine that has been widely available for months -- or face financial consequences. If successful, administration officials believe it will go a long way toward ending a pandemic that has killed more than 750,000 Americans. First previewed by President Joe Biden in September, the requirements will apply to about 84 million workers at medium and large businesses, although it is not clear how many of those employees are unvaccinated.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-employer-mandates-us-29c2262c336bcfc38da2d14b251daf51>

### **Feds tout COVID-19 pediatric vaccines as way back to normal**

Today during a White House press briefing, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH, said now that she has authorized the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 5 to 11, American schoolchildren have the chance to experience school "as we once one knew it, and as it should be." Walensky and Jeff Zients, the White House COVID-19 response coordinator, both called today a monumental day in the nation's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and assured American parents that the use of vaccines in kids ages 5 to 11 would be safe, free, and convenient. "We have been planning for this, and we are fully prepared," said Zients, who said the pediatric campaign will begin officially on Nov 8, but said some clinics and pharmacies have already begun to offer inoculations to kids. "I want to speak directly to parents," Walensky said. "Please know we have conducted a thorough review of the safety data before recommending this vaccine for your child."

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/11/feds-tout-covid-19-pediatric-vaccines-way-back-normal>

### **White House delays Covid-19 vaccine mandates for contractors**

The White House is delaying its mandate for contractors to get vaccinated against Covid-19 until Jan. 4, the administration announced Thursday, as it rolled out more details about its sweeping vaccination mandates. Contractors previously had until Dec. 8 to get vaccinated, per a September executive order from the White House. They now have until Jan. 4, as do health workers at hospitals and facilities that participate in Medicare and Medicaid. Under a separate policy, companies with 100 or more employees will also have until Jan. 4 to mandate full vaccinations for their workers or offer a plan for weekly testing. But by Dec. 5, they must require unvaccinated workers to wear masks and undergo weekly testing.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/11/04/white-house-delays-covid-19-vaccine-mandates-for-federal-employees-contractors/>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Pregnant Women Who Doubt Covid-19 Vaccine Safety Worry Doctors**

Jaime Francis is avoiding all medication during her pregnancy, including Covid-19 vaccines. Her obstetrician advised her not to take some common painkillers including ibuprofen, she said, and she didn't fill a prescription she was given for nausea. With the Covid-19 vaccine, the 22-year-old delivery driver from Sparta Township, N.J., said she fears potential long-term developmental effects of the vaccine that might not be known yet. Doctors and researchers say the shots are safe, effective and crucial for pregnant women, who face higher risks of severe Covid-19 than the rest of the population.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/pregnant-women-who-doubt-covid-19-vaccine-safety-worry-doctors-11636018201>

### **Senate Republicans to Force Vote to Block Biden Business Vaccine Mandate**

Senate Republicans plan to force a vote to block President Joe Biden's new vaccine mandates for workers, an effort that is all but certain to fail in the Democratic-controlled Congress. The mandate fight, however, could soon head to the courts and potentially be an issue in the 2022 midterm

elections. Under the Congressional Review Act, a Senate minority can force votes to block regulations like the new vaccine mandates scheduled to take effect Jan. 4, but it would take Democratic defections to send such a bill to Biden's desk and a two-thirds majority to override a veto. Action isn't likely to take place until December.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-04/senate-republicans-to-force-vote-on-blocking-vaccine-mandate>

### **White House Sets Jan. 4 Shots-or-Tests Deadline for Workers**

OSHA has issued a federal rule mandating Covid-19 vaccinations or at least weekly testing for workers at U.S. companies with 100 or more employees. The OSHA rules are a key pillar of President Joe Biden's push to use employer mandates to drive up vaccination totals nationally. Biden already has expanded the rules for federal workers and contractors, which will take effect over the next five weeks, requiring vaccination and offering no alternative for regular testing. The OSHA rules, while less strenuous, essentially extend that push widely into the private sector. Biden—elected in part on a pledge to quell the pandemic—views vaccination as the fastest path to reopening society and the economy, including employer mandates, booster shots and vaccines for kids aged 5 to 11 that began this week. About 80% of U.S. adults have received at least one dose.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-04/workplace-vaccination-rule-released-as-red-states-prepare-to-sue>

### **'He was adamant he didn't want it': the pro-vax parents with vaccine-hesitant kids**

Even if children have avoided anti-vaccine misinformation on social media, they may have come across it at the school gate. There have been demonstrations outside schools across the UK; some protesters have loudhailers, and give alarming leaflets to children, or point them in the direction of websites with misinformation. At least one school was targeted by protesters showing images of what appeared to be dead children, falsely claiming they had been killed by the vaccine, which unsurprisingly distressed children. The Association of School and College Leaders union found nearly 80% of British schools had been targeted in some way – mainly emails threatening legal action – and 13% had reported seeing anti-vax demonstrators directly outside the school gates; 18 schools said protesters had actually got inside.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/nov/04/he-was-adamant-he-didnt-want-it-the-pro-vax-parents-with-vaccine-hesitant-kids>

### **Vaccine certificates-for-sale scam undermines Lesotho's Covid effort**

The Lesotho government's plans to implement a Covid passport system this week are being undermined by widespread fraud involving certificates being sold to unvaccinated people. Covid-19 vaccination certificates are being sold for less than £20 by unscrupulous health workers to the largely vaccine-averse population in Lesotho, where there has been little positive campaigning around the jabs. The prime minister, Moeketsi Majoro, announced in October that from this week, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, gyms and sporting facilities would only admit people who had a Covid-19 vaccination certificate.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/nov/04/vaccine-certificates-for-sale-scam-undermines-lesothos-covid-effort>

### **Australian customer service workers subjected to violence and abuse for Covid-19 compliance checks**

Customer Service staff face increase of abuse amid Covid compliance checks National Retail Association (NRA) received 89k reports of abuse in last 6 months Aggressive & violent behaviour mainly occurred where Covid rules are in place NRA says shoppers need to remember staff are not responsible for Covid laws

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10163221/Australian-customer-service-workers-subjected-violence-abuse-Covid-19-compliance-checks.html>

## **Aaron Rodgers' Covid-19 case is a failure of leadership that won't be forgotten**

Aaron Rodgers may be a lot of things but stupid he is not. A noted bookworm and fill-in Jeopardy host, Rodgers of all people is keenly aware that words matter. In hindsight this explains why back in August when he was asked about his vaccination status by a reporter, he replied with a cryptic: "I've been immunized." If you're like me, you thought Rodgers' response was him being him - eccentric with maybe a touch of arrogance - but you assumed immunized equaled vaccinated. Sigh. Well, now it's looking likely that Rodgers misled us all along. On Wednesday, the news broke that Rodgers tested positive for Covid-19 and will miss Sunday's game against the Kansas City Chiefs because he is, indeed, not immunized with an actual Covid vaccine.

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/nov/04/aaron-rodgers-covid-vaccine-leadership>

## **Johnson's COVID-19 gambit steers Britain into uncharted winter waters**

Inside the British hospital that saved Prime Minister Boris Johnson from COVID-19, intensive care nurse Dave Carr just wants out. "We are dead on our feet physically. We are dead on our feet mentally," he said. "I don't know how to get out of this mess. I can't walk away because of the guilt of leaving my colleagues." Britain, its hospitals and its COVID-19 strategy are under the microscope as the country enters the dangerous winter period while accounting for almost a tenth of the world's recorded new infections.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/johnsons-covid-19-gambit-steers-britain-into-uncharted-winter-waters-2021-11-04/>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **UK Approves Merck Covid Drug Molnupiravir to Fill In Where Vaccines Can't**

The U.K. was the first country to approve a Covid-19 vaccine; it has now become the first to approve an at-home treatment for Covid. On Thursday, the medicines regulator, MHRA, green-lit the antiviral drug molnupiravir, produced by Ridgeback Biotherapeutics and Merck & Co. and shown in trials to halve the risk of hospitalization or death in those with mild to moderate disease. Health Secretary Sajid Javid called it a "historic day for our country." For once that might not be an overstatement. Beyond Britain, the new drug should be a reminder of the importance of antivirals in the fight against this and future pandemics. The molnupiravir approval couldn't be timelier. Britain has had a stubbornly high Covid infection rate. Although the most recent wave has not led to a marked increase in deaths from the virus, hospitals face a gargantuan backlog of delayed procedures, Covid wards are fuller than is comfortable and there are worries that a bad flu season could tip an overstretched health service into deeper crisis.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-11-04/u-k-approves-merck-covid-drug-molnupiravir-to-fill-in-where-vaccines-can-t>

### **Oxford Scientists Find Gene That Doubles Risk of Dying From Covid-19**

Scientists identified a specific gene that doubles the risk of respiratory failure from Covid-19 and may go some way to explaining why some ethnic groups are more susceptible to severe disease than others. Researchers from the University of Oxford found that a higher-risk version of the gene most likely prevents the cells lining airways and the lungs from responding to the virus properly. About 60% of people with South Asian ancestry carry this version of the gene, compared with 15% of people with European heritage, according to the study published Thursday. The findings help explain why higher rates of hospitalization and death may have been seen in certain communities and on the Indian subcontinent. The authors cautioned that the gene cannot be used as a sole explanation as many other factors, such as socioeconomic conditions, play a role. Despite a significant impact from the virus to people with Afro-Caribbean ancestry, only 2% carry the higher-risk genotype. People with the gene, known as LZTFL1, would particularly benefit from vaccination, which remains the best method of protection, the authors said. The findings raise the possibility of research into treatments specific to patients with this gene, though no tailored drugs are currently available.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-04/scientists-find-gene-that-doubles-risk-of-dying-from-covid-19>

### **Britain approves Merck's oral COVID-19 pill in world first**

Britain on Thursday became the first country in the world to approve a potentially game-changing COVID-19 antiviral oral pill jointly developed by Merck and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, in a boost to the fight against the pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/britain-approves-mercks-oral-covid-19-pill-2021-11-04/>

### **AstraZeneca pulls request for Swiss approval of COVID shot**

AstraZeneca said Thursday that it is withdrawing its application for approval of its COVID-19 vaccine in Switzerland because the country's medical regulator wanted to restrict its use to people over age 50. Switzerland has cleared the BioNTech-Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines for use. However, national medical regulator Swissmedic hadn't yet granted marketing authorization for the AstraZeneca vaccine.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/astrazeneca-pulls-request-swiss-approval-covid-shot-80969817>

### **Indian home-grown Covid-19 shot wins WHO emergency use approval**

The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday that it has granted approval for Indian drugmaker Bharat Biotech's home-grown Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use listing, paving the way for it to be accepted as a valid vaccine in many poor countries. The WHO tweeted that its technical advisory group had ruled that benefits of the shot, known as Covaxin, significantly outweighed the risks and that it met WHO standards for protection against Covid-19. The decision had been delayed as the advisory group sought additional clarifications from Bharat Biotech before conducting a final risk-benefit assessment for the vaccine's global use. WHO's Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization also recommended Covaxin's use in two doses, with an interval of four weeks, in age groups 18 and above. These recommendations are in line with the company's guidance.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/03/asia/india-covaxin-who-approval-intl-hnk/index.html>

### **COVID-19: 'Millions of years lost' and life expectancy cut short around the world**

More than 28 million "extra years of life" have been lost during the coronavirus pandemic, a new study has found. By comparing the lives cut short by COVID-19 and the estimated normal life spans of those who died, researchers, led by a team at Oxford University, calculated that millions of years of life have been lost from premature deaths. The findings also follow a significant fall in life expectancy around the globe. The new research assessed the toll of the pandemic on 37 countries, including England and Wales.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-millions-of-years-lost-and-life-expectancy-cut-short-around-the-world-12458998>

### **No decrease in effectiveness if COVID-19 jab and flu vaccine is taken together - WHO**

People can get inoculated against COVID-19 and the seasonal influenza at the same time without compromising the vaccines' effectiveness, a World Health Organization official said on Thursday. "Anybody can get both the vaccines together - there is no decrease in effectiveness of either of the vaccines when given together at one point of time," Siddhartha Datta, the WHO Europe's regional adviser for vaccines, told a news briefing.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/no-decrease-effectiveness-if-covid-19-jab-flu-vaccine-is-taken-together-who-2021-11-04/>

### **EU regulator reviewing data on AstraZeneca COVID-19 booster shots**

The European Union's drug regulator said on Thursday it was in discussions with AstraZeneca (AZN.L) over possible authorisation of booster doses of the drugmaker's COVID-19 vaccine, after it already gave the green light to mRNA booster shots. "AstraZeneca is submitting data to us. Actually

today they submitted a new package of data that could support an extension to use the booster," the European Medicines Agency's head of vaccines strategy, Marco Cavaleri, said at a briefing. "We will be discussing with them whether this data could be sufficient for (authorisation) or whether we need more evidence," Cavaleri added.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-regulator-reviewing-data-astrazeneca-covid-19-booster-shots-2021-11-04/>

### **Factbox: Countries rush to buy Merck's experimental COVID-19 pill**

While the drug's approval in the United States is still pending, Britain on Thursday became the first country in the world to approve the pill. Last week the company reached a deal with the United Nations-backed Medicines Patent Pool that will allow more companies to manufacture generic versions of the pill with a royalty-free licence applying to 105 low- and middle-income countries. So far Merck has agreed to license the drug to several India-based generic drugmakers.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/countries-rush-buy-merck-experimental-covid-19-pill-2021-11-03/>

### **Europe faces real threat of COVID-19 resurgence, WHO Europe head says**

European countries must work harder to prevent the coronavirus spreading further as deaths and new cases surge, the World Health Organization's Europe head said on Thursday. Current transmission rates in 53 European countries are of "grave concern" and new cases are nearing record levels, exacerbated by the more transmissible Delta variant of the virus, the WHO's Hans Kluge told a media briefing. "We must change our tactics, from reacting to surges of COVID-19, to preventing them from happening in the first place,"

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/covid-19-transmission-rates-europe-grave-concern-who-europe-head-says-2021-11-04/>

### **Britain approves Merck's COVID-19 pill in world first**

Britain on Thursday became the first country in the world to approve a potentially game-changing COVID-19 antiviral pill jointly developed by U.S.-based Merck & Co Inc and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, in a boost to the fight against the pandemic. Britain's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) recommended the drug, molnupiravir, for use in people with mild to moderate COVID-19 and at least one risk factor for developing severe illness, such as obesity, older age diabetes, and heart disease. It will be administered as soon as possible following a positive COVID-19 test and within five days of the onset of symptoms, the regulator said, citing clinical data

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/britain-approves-mercks-oral-covid-19-pill-2021-11-04/>

### **UK authorizes Merck antiviral pill, 1st shown to treat COVID**

Britain granted conditional authorization on Thursday to the first pill shown to successfully treat COVID-19 so far. It also is the first country to OK the treatment from drugmaker Merck, although it wasn't immediately clear how quickly the pill would be available. The pill was licensed for adults 18 and older who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have at least one risk factor for developing severe disease, such as obesity or heart disease. Patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 would take four pills of the drug, known molnupiravir, twice a day for five days. An antiviral pill that reduces symptoms and speeds recovery could prove groundbreaking, easing caseloads on hospitals and helping to curb outbreaks in poorer countries with fragile health systems. It would also bolster the two-pronged approach to the pandemic: treatment, by way of medication, and prevention, primarily through vaccinations.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-europe-health-pandemics-17905e9505a5ff50f2436b2bcb22f59f>

### **Are COVID-19 boosters the same as the original vaccines?**

Are COVID-19 boosters the same as the original vaccines? Yes, COVID-19 boosters use the same recipe as the original shots, despite the emergence of the more contagious delta variant. The vaccines weren't tweaked to better match delta because they're still working well. The vaccines work by training your body to recognize and fight the spike protein that coats the coronavirus and helps it invade the body's cells. Delta's mutations fortunately weren't different enough to escape detection. The increased protection you might get from a booster adjusted to better match the delta or other variants would be marginal, says Dr. Paul Goepfert, director of the Alabama Vaccine Research Clinic at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-science-health-alabama-coronavirus-vaccine-507492229abfbc9b42d21d6de605e841>

### **Real-world study shows J&J COVID-19 vaccine 74% effective**

The Johnson & Johnson (J&J) adenovirus-based COVID-19 vaccine is 74% effective in preventing SARS-CoV-2 infection even amid phases of high Alpha (B.1.1.7) and Delta (B.1.617.2) variant circulation, according to the preliminary findings of a real-world US study yesterday in JAMA Network Open. The comparative-effectiveness study, led by researchers from Inference, a Massachusetts software company affiliated with Janssen, maker of the J&J vaccine, involved mining the Mayo Clinic electronic health records (EHRs) of 8,889 vaccinated and 88,898 matched unvaccinated adults living in 1 of 15 states from Feb 27 to Jul 22, 2021. The EHRs were from the multistate Mayo Clinic Health System. Men made up roughly half of both groups of patients, with a mean age of 52.4 years in the vaccinated group and 51.7 in the unvaccinated group.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/11/real-world-study-shows-jj-covid-19-vaccine-74-effective>

### **Shipping delays, supply chain expansions ding Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine business**

Moderna has been biotech's biggest growth story in 2021, but the company's rate of expansion slowed considerably in recent months as shipping delays and a supply chain scale-up took a toll. In the third quarter, the mRNA biotech delivered 208 million COVID-19 vaccine doses worldwide, a figure Chief Financial Officer David Meline called a "relatively modest" increase from the 199 million doses it delivered in the second quarter. What's behind the slowdown? Moderna shipped more doses internationally in the third quarter than in prior periods. Those shipments required "longer delivery lead times" than its earlier doses, the company said, leading to export delays. "Our supply chain became more complex, with increased deliveries" to various countries around the world, CEO Stéphane Bancel said on a conference call Thursday. Moderna has been charging lower prices to many of the recently added countries, Bancel added.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/shipping-delays-supply-chain-expansion-ding-moderna-s-covid-19-vaccine-business>

### **Merck and Ridgeback's COVID-19 oral antiviral molnupiravir joins the pandemic response with U.K. nod**

Since the start of the pandemic, even as vaccines and monoclonal antibodies made their way onto the market, an authorized oral antiviral therapy evaded the global response. Not anymore. Merck & Co. and Ridgeback Therapeutics' molnupiravir has scored its first authorization in the world. U.K. Regulators signed off on the oral antiviral for adults who've had a positive COVID-19 test and who have at least one risk factor. The country's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency green-lit the drug based on an interim analysis from the phase 3 Move-Out trial. The study showed the med, given at 800 mg twice daily, reduced the risk of hospitalization or death by about 50% in adult patients who were not hospitalized or vaccinated. For the study, the mild-to-moderate patients had symptom onset within five days of randomization, and they also had at least one risk factor. Ahead of the authorization, the U.K. government inked a deal to purchase 480,000 courses from Merck. In the U.K., the drug will be marketed as Lagevrio.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/merck-and-ridgeback-s-covid-19-antiviral-molnupiravir-joins-pandemic-response-u-k-nod>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Europe's 'insufficient vaccine coverage' is blamed by WHO for surge in Covid cases**

WHO Europe director Hans Kluge warned Europe is now 'back at the centre of the pandemic.' Kluge said the rising number of cases could mean another half a million people will die from Covid in the next three months. Kluge blamed the caseload of Europe's 'insufficient vaccination coverage,' It comes as Germany recorded record number of cases, with health minister warning a 'massive' pandemic of the unvaccinated

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10165063/Europes-insufficient-vaccine-coverage-blamed-surge-Covid-cases.html>

### **Covid-19: 12 more deaths and 1,481 new coronavirus cases**

Twelve more Covid-19-related deaths have been reported in Northern Ireland on Thursday. Deaths are measured by recording those who died within 28 days of receiving a positive result in a test for coronavirus. The total number of deaths linked to Covid-19 in Northern Ireland since the start of the pandemic is 2,737. Another 1,481 cases of coronavirus were reported, up from 995 cases recorded on Wednesday. That includes cases confirmed from samples taken in recent days, not necessarily just in the latest 24-hour reporting period.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-59162601>

### **Russia's daily COVID-19 death toll hits record high**

Russia's daily COVID-19 death toll reached a record high of 1,195 on Thursday amid a surge in cases that has forced officials to impose a nationwide workplace shutdown. The government coronavirus task force also reported 40,217 new infections in the past 24 hours, including 6,305 in Moscow.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-daily-covid-19-death-toll-hits-record-high-2021-11-04/>

### **England sees record COVID prevalence in October -Imperial study**

COVID-19 prevalence in England rose to its highest level on record in October, Imperial College London said on Thursday, led by a high numbers of cases in children and a surge in the south-west of the country. Nearly 6% of school-aged children had COVID-19, the researchers found, although there was a drop in prevalence towards the end of the study's period coinciding with the closure of schools for half-term holiday. Despite that dip, researchers said rates had doubled in older groups compared to September, a concerning sign as the government races to give booster shots to the most vulnerable.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/england-sees-record-covid-prevalence-october-imperial-study-2021-11-04/>

### **Croatia, Slovenia hit highest number of daily COVID-19 infections**

Croatia reported on Thursday 6,310 infections of COVID-19 which is the highest daily number of infections since the beginning of the pandemic, the national health authorities said. At the moment there are 25,628 active COVID-19 cases in a country of around 4 million people, while 1,680 patients require hospital treatment. In Croatia a bit over 50% of population is fully vaccinated and experts largely blame such a low vaccination rate for the increase in infections in recent weeks.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/croatia-slovenia-hit-highest-number-daily-covid-19-infections-2021-11-04/>

### **German COVID-19 cases hit daily record as health ministers meet**

Germany reported 33,949 new COVID-19 infections, the highest daily increase since the start of the pandemic last year, ahead of a two-day meeting of state health ministers starting on Thursday. Countries across Europe have been reporting rises in coronavirus infections, prompting debate over whether to reintroduce restrictions and how to persuade more people to get vaccinated. The daily

number of cases was likely inflated by a public holiday in parts of Germany on Monday that led to a delay in data-gathering. The previous record was on Dec. 18, with 33,777 cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/environment/german-covid-19-cases-hit-daily-record-health-ministers-meet-2021-11-04/>

### **Austrian coronavirus cases surge as lockdown for vaccine holdouts looms**

Having taken a hands-off approach to restrictions last summer, the conservative-led government has since outlined a plan under which the unvaccinated population will be placed under lockdown, with restrictions on their daily movements, once 600 intensive-care beds are filled with COVID-19 patients. Under that incremental plan the unvaccinated, not including those who have recovered from a coronavirus infection, will be barred from cafes and restaurants once 500 intensive-care beds are occupied by COVID-19 patients. The number of those beds currently in use is 352 and rising by more than 10 a day.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/austrian-coronavirus-cases-surge-as-lockdown-for-vaccine-holdouts-looms/ar-AAQjRqX>

### **Belgian COVID-19 hospitalisations rise back to Oct 2020 levels**

Belgium on Thursday reported a jump in COVID-19 infections and hospitalisations rose back to levels that had forced a lockdown in October 2020, as the United States advised against travelling to the host of EU and NATO headquarters. Data from Belgium's Sciensano health institute showed 6,728 daily new cases on average in the last 14 days, up 36% from the previous week. An average of 164 patients with COVID-19 were admitted to hospitals daily in the last seven days, a 31% increase, and 343 coronavirus patients were in intensive care.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/belgian-covid-19-hospitalisations-rise-back-oct-2020-levels-2021-11-04/>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **COVID-hit China keeps vigil at borders, restricts local tourism**

China is on high alert at its international ports of entry to reduce the risk of COVID-19 cases entering from abroad, and it has stepped up restrictions within the country amid a growing outbreak less than 100 days before the Beijing Winter Olympics. The National Immigration Administration (NIA) said on Thursday it would continue to guide citizens not to go abroad for non-urgent and non-essential reasons. The dramatic drop in Chinese travellers since early last year has left a \$255 billion annual spending hole in the global tourism market

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/china-keeps-close-vigil-ports-entry-cut-covid-19-risks-2021-11-04/>