

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 8th Nov 2021

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Healthy buildings can help stop Covid-19 spread and boost worker productivity**

Healthy buildings have become the latest enticement to bring employees back into the office, and the first step is to make sure ventilation systems are working the way they are supposed to. Improving indoor air quality in offices could add as much as \$20 billion annually to the U.S. economy, according to estimates from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. "I don't think business people realize the power of buildings to not only keep people safe from disease but to lead to better performance," said Joseph G. Allen, Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health associate professor.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/06/healthy-buildings-can-help-stop-covid-19-boost-worker-productivity.html>

#### **U.S. braces for surge of vaccinated international travelers**

The United States is expecting a flood of international visitors crossing its borders by air and by land on Monday after lifting travel restrictions for much of the world's population first imposed in early 2020 to address the spread of COVID-19. United Airlines is expecting about 50% more total international inbound passengers Monday compared to last Monday when it had about 20,000. And Delta Air Lines Chief Executive Ed Bastian has warned travelers should be prepared for initial long lines.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-braces-surge-vaccinated-international-travelers-2021-11-07/>

#### **Sydney to further ease COVID-19 curbs on Monday as vaccinations pick up**

Australia's largest city of Sydney will further ease social distancing curbs on Monday, a month after emerging from a coronavirus lockdown that lasted nearly 100 days, as close to 90% of people have got both doses of vaccine, officials said. Although limited to people who are fully inoculated, the relaxation in the state of New South Wales, home to Sydney, lifts limits on house guests or outdoor gatherings, among other measures. "We're leading the nation out of the pandemic," said state premier Dominic Perrottet, as he called for a "final push" to reach, and even surpass, a milestone of 95% vaccinations.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/sydney-further-ease-covid-19-curbs-monday-vaccinations-pick-up-2021-11-07/>

#### **U.S. to convene foreign ministers on COVID-19 next week, pledges to talk vaccine equity**

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday he would convene a virtual meeting of foreign ministers from around the globe to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic next week, pledging to work to address global inequalities in access to vaccines. "Despite progress in worldwide vaccination, we are not where we need to be," Blinken said in a statement announcing the meeting on Nov. 10.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-convene-foreign-ministers-covid-19-next-week-pledges-talk-vaccine-equity-2021-11-05/>

#### **More proof England's Covid outbreak has 'peaked'**

The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) weekly surveillance report estimated 1.1million people were infected with the virus at any time in the week to October 30 — the equivalent of one in 50. This was approximately the same as the previous seven-day spell, bringing an end to nearly three months of rising cases which began in August. Experts say the levelling off suggests the latest wave of Covid triggered by the return of schoolchildren has 'likely' come to a natural peak, due to a combination of

vaccine immunity and previous infection. But the ONS data suggests the outbreak is still as big as it was at the peak of the second wave in January and the weekly total is the third highest ever recorded, even though deaths are just a fraction of levels seen during the darkest days of the crisis.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10169285/More-proof-Englands-Covid-outbreak-peaked.html>

### **AIIB to continue vaccine funding for developing nations in 2022**

China-backed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will continue to finance developing countries acquire COVID-19 vaccines, a senior executive said on Thursday. Last year, AIIB had set up a funding facility to help public and private sectors fight the pandemic. The investment bank has approved 42 projects amounting to over \$10.3 billion, as of Nov. 5. Its Crisis Recovery Facility has up to \$13 billion allocated to support AIIB members and clients in withstanding economic and health impacts of the health crisis.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/cop/aiib-continue-vaccine-funding-developing-nations-2022-2021-11-05/>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **UK to roll out COVID-19 antiviral drug trial this month -Health Security Agency**

Britain will start to roll out Merck's molnupiravir COVID-19 antiviral pill through a drug trial later this month, Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Adviser at the UK Health Security Agency said on Sunday. Last week Britain became the first country in the world to approve the potentially game-changing COVID-19 antiviral pill, jointly developed by U.S.-based Merck & Co Inc and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics. The government said in October it had secured 480,000 courses of the Merck drug, as well as 250,000 courses of an antiviral pill developed by Pfizer Inc

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/uk-roll-out-covid-19-antiviral-drug-trial-this-month-health-security-agency-2021-11-07/>

### **Costa Rica issues COVID-19 vaccine requirement for children**

Costa Rican children aged five and up must get COVID-19 vaccinations, according to a new health ministry mandate, making the Central American country one of the first to adopt such a requirement for kids. The move would add COVID-19 to a list of other infectious diseases in which vaccines for children have for years been required, including for polio and smallpox. "Our basic vaccination scheme has made it possible to subdue many of the viruses that cause suffering and health consequences and even fatalities in the underage population," Health Minister Daniel Salas said in a statement issued on Friday,

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/costa-rica-issues-covid-19-vaccine-requirement-children-2021-11-06/>

### **China has given 75.96% of population complete COVID-19 vaccine doses**

China had given 1.072 billion people complete COVID-19 vaccine doses by Nov. 5, Mi Feng, spokesman at the National Health Commission, told a briefing on Saturday. That accounts for 75.96% of the nation's 1.41 billion people, Reuters calculation showed. A total of 37.97 million people in China had received a booster shot as of Friday, commission official Wu Liangyou said at the briefing. The commission said in a bulletin that China had administered 2.312 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines by the end of Nov. 5, an increase of about 8.9 million from the previous day.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-gives-107-blm-people-complete-covid-19-vaccine-doses-by-nov-5-official-2021-11-06/>

### **Britain allows early booking of booster shots to speed up rollout**

Britain's health ministry on Saturday said it would open up bookings for booster shots a month before people were eligible to receive the shots to help speed up the rollout ahead of the challenging winter months. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is relying on booster doses as a major plank of his plan to avoid lockdown this winter through COVID-19 vaccines rather than social distancing rules or mask mandates, but has been criticised for a slow start to the programme. Around 3 in 5

eligible over-50s have had booster shots in England, with more than 9 million people getting booster doses in Britain overall so far.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-allows-early-booking-booster-shots-speed-up-rollout-2021-11-06/>

### **Australia hits 'magnificent milestone' with 80% rate of vaccinations**

Australia reached on Saturday a full inoculation rate of 80% of those aged 16 and older, which Prime Minister Scott Morrison called a “magnificent milestone” on the path to becoming one of the world’s most vaccinated countries against COVID-19. Once a champion of a COVID-zero strategy to manage the pandemic, the country of 25 million has moved towards living with the virus through extensive vaccinations, as the Delta variant has proven too infectious to suppress. “Another, magnificent milestone, Australia,” Morrison said in a video post on Facebook. “That’s four out of five, how good is that? This has been a true Australian national effort.”

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-australia/australia-hits-magnificent-milestone-with-80-rate-of-vaccinations-idUSKBN2HR046>

### **Pfizer COVID-19 pill data slams competitors' shares, shakes up healthcare sector**

Pfizer Inc's stunning data here for an experimental pill to fight COVID-19 rippled through the healthcare sector on Friday, boosting shares of the pharmaceutical giant while slamming the stocks of vaccine makers and other competitors. A trial of Pfizer’s experimental antiviral pill was stopped early after it was shown to cut by 89% the chances of hospitalization or death for adults at risk of developing severe disease. “The market was certainly not pricing in Pfizer’s data readout this early and probably not this high” in terms of effectiveness, said Kevin Gade, a portfolio manager specializing in healthcare at Bahl & Gaynor.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/usa-stocks-healthcare/pfizer-covid-19-pill-data-slams-competitors-shares-shakes-up-healthcare-sector-idUSL1N2RW1TQ>

### **Fewer U.S. workers sidelined as Delta cases began to fall, survey shows**

The number of U.S. workers unable to work at some point over the previous four weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic dropped by more than a million in October, while fewer people reported not looking for jobs because of those health concerns as cases began to fall, a Labor Department survey showed on Friday. Approximately 3.83 million people were unable to work in October or reported reduced hours due to their business either closing entirely or cutting back operations, down from roughly 5.03 million in the prior month, according to the survey, resuming a downward trend that was interrupted by a rise in August.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/markets/fewer-us-workers-sidelined-as-delta-cases-began-to-fall-survey-shows/ar-AAQmsWA>

### **S.Korea to purchase 70000 courses of new Pfizer COVID-19 pill**

South Korea has agreed to buy 70,000 courses of Pfizer Inc's experimental antiviral COVID-19 pill, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said on Saturday. Pfizer on Friday said trial results showed that its Paxlovid pill reduced by 89% the risk of hospitalization or death in patients at high risk of severe illness within three days of the onset of coronavirus symptoms. South Korea has already signed agreements to secure 200,000 courses of Merck & Co Inc's COVID-19 treatment.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-purchase-70000-courses-new-pfizer-covid-19-pill-2021-11-06/>

### **Puerto Rico will require COVID-19 vaccinations for schools | TheHill**

Puerto Rico will require children five years old and older to get the coronavirus vaccine in order to attend school, the governor announced Wednesday. The governor said there will be few exceptions granted for the requirement as the coronavirus vaccine was just approved for those ages 5 to 11, The Associated Press reported. Health Secretary Carlos Mellado says the goal is to get 95 percent of 5- to 11-year-olds fully vaccinated. The announcement to require vaccines in schools comes as Puerto Rico leads U.S. states and territories with the highest vaccination rates.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/580226-puerto-rico-will-require-covid-19-vaccinations-for-schools>

### **More people are getting COVID vaccine boosters than first shots : Shots**

The number of people getting COVID-19 vaccine boosters in the U.S. is now far outpacing the number getting their first shots, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That trend represents a big success for White House's aggressive booster campaign. But it also underscores the administration's flagging effort to achieve its high priority of vaccinating the remaining unvaccinated Americans. More than 21 million people have already received a booster in the short time they've been widely available, according to the CDC website. And more than 786,000 are getting boosters every day now on average. That's nearly triple the number coming in for their first shots, though the rollout to kids under 12 could potentially change that equation.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/11/05/1051412471/theres-more-demand-for-boosters-than-first-shots-of-the-covid-vaccine>

### **Spain donates 326,400 Covid-19 vaccines to Ivory Coast**

The first shipment of Covid-19 vaccines that Spain has donated to a sub-Saharan African country arrived on Thursday in Abidjan, the economic capital of Ivory Coast, which is also known as Côte d'Ivoire. The delivery contained 326,400 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine against Covid-19, along with another 98,400 shots of the same medication donated by Finland and 7,200 from Iceland. The donations are part of the public-private initiative Covax, which seeks to ensure that lower-income countries are not left behind in the global vaccination drive to curb the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2021-11-05/spain-donates-326400-covid-19-vaccines-to-ivory-coast.html>

### **Croatia tightens measures to fight spreading of COVID-19**

Amid new record-high COVID-19 daily infections Croatia decided on Friday to tighten measures against the spreading of the disease, including introducing obligatory digital certificates for public sector employees. Croatia reported 6,932 new cases of COVID-19 on Friday, the highest daily number since the beginning of the pandemic. Slightly over 50% of around four million Croats are fully vaccinated and experts largely blame a low vaccination rate for a large increase in the number of infections in recent weeks.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/croatia-tightens-measures-fight-spreading-covid-19-2021-11-05/>

### **Malta to offer COVID-19 booster shots to all its population**

Malta will offer COVID-19 booster shots to all of its population after a recent increase in cases, Health Minister Chris Fearne said on Friday. Malta has the highest number of vaccinated people in the European Union, with 94% of the people having been fully vaccinated. However, minister Fearne told a press conference that it was clear that the effectiveness of the vaccines was waning after health authorities said the country recorded 40 new cases of the virus on Friday, the highest in six weeks.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/malta-offer-covid-19-booster-shots-all-its-population-2021-11-05/>

### **Latvia allows businesses to fire the unvaccinated**

The Latvian parliament on Thursday allowed businesses to fire workers who refuse to either get a COVID-19 vaccine or transfer to remote work, as the country battles one of the worst COVID-19 waves in European Union. About 61% of Latvian adults are fully vaccinated, less than the European Union average of 75%. The country was the first in EU to return to a lockdown this autumn as COVID-19 cases spiked, and has asked other EU members for medical help as makeshift COVID-19 facilities are installed in halls and garages of its hospitals

<https://www.reuters.com/world/latvia-allows-businesses-fire-unvaccinated-2021-11-04/>

### **With fourth wave raging, Germany agrees booster shots for all**

Germany's COVID-19 situation is entering a very difficult period with rising numbers of intensive care patients, health minister Jens Spahn said, as German state leaders warned the country may need a new lockdown unless it takes urgent action. Spahn said he had agreed with regional health ministers that in future everyone should be offered a booster shot of COVID-19 vaccine six months after receiving their previous injection. "This should become the norm, not the exception," Spahn said at a news conference on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/action-needed-now-avoid-lockdown-say-german-state-leaders-2021-11-05/>

### **States Sue to Stop Biden's Covid-19 Vaccine Mandate**

More than half of U.S. states are suing to stop the Biden administration from implementing new rules that require employers with more than 100 workers to ensure their employees are vaccinated against Covid-19 or get a weekly test. The states' attorneys general, who filed multiple lawsuits in various courts Friday, said they were suing because the federal government doesn't have the authority to issue the requirements. They say the issue should be left to states. "States have been leading the fight against COVID-19 from the start of the pandemic," Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, a Democrat, said Friday. "It is too late to impose a federal standard now that we have already developed systems and strategies that are tailored for our specific needs."

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/states-sue-to-stop-bidens-covid-19-vaccine-mandate-11636137439>

### **Partisan Exits**

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#### **U.S. federal appeals court freezes Biden's vaccine rule for companies**

A U.S. federal appeals court issued a stay Saturday freezing the Biden administration's efforts to require workers at U.S. companies with at least 100 employees be vaccinated against COVID-19 or be tested weekly, citing "grave statutory and constitutional" issues with the rule. The ruling from the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit comes after numerous Republican-led states filed legal challenges against the new rule, which is set to take effect on Jan 4.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-federal-appeals-court-issues-stay-bidens-vaccine-rule-us-companies-2021-11-06/>

#### **Unvaccinated in Greece face new restrictions as COVID cases soar**

Queues formed outside shops in Athens on Saturday on the first day of new restrictions to curb soaring coronavirus infections which require the unvaccinated to have negative COVID-19 tests. COVID-19 infections in Greece hit a new daily high almost every day in November, prompting authorities to announce new measures on Tuesday, which also restrict access to cafes and restaurants, state services and banks to those who are either vaccinated or have a negative test.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/unvaccinated-greece-face-new-restrictions-covid-cases-soar-2021-11-06/>

#### **Republican governors lead attack on Biden vaccine mandate**

Republican governors began filing lawsuits on Friday to stop the Biden administration's requirement that nearly 2 million U.S. employers get workers tested or vaccinated for COVID-19, saying it trampled civil liberties. After President Joe Biden, a Democrat, said on Thursday he will enforce the mandate starting Jan. 4, the states of Florida, Georgia and Alabama jointly sued in the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta. "The federal government can't just unilaterally impose medical policy under the guise of workplace regulation," Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said at a press conference on Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/republican-governors-lead-attack-biden-vaccine-mandate-2021-11-05/>

#### **How a vaccine-hesitant sheriff became a vocal proponent**

Every morning before the dew has dried on Andre Brunson's 80 acres of land along Alabama's Uphapee Creek, he swings his pickup truck out on to the gravel road leading from his house in

Alabama. When heading for his eight-hour shift, he packs his bulletproof vest, gun, flashlight and now – since coronavirus sent him to the hospital in January – an asthma inhaler and a nebulizer. Brunson lives in Tuskegee, where he’s the county sheriff. “I’m a big strong guy and I just thought it was never going to affect me. Once I got Covid I realized I’m just like everybody else,” he said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/05/vaccine-sceptical-sheriff-proponent-covid>

### **Man dies two weeks after sharing video boasting about Covid-19 symptoms but saying virus wasn’t real**

A Canadian man has died two weeks after he boasted about having Covid-19 symptoms while insisting the virus isn’t real in a livestreamed video. Mak Parhar was found dead by paramedics at his home in New Westminster, British Columbia, on Thursday morning. His cause of death is still under investigation, Global News reported. Mr Parhar, who was an outspoken opponent of Canada’s mask and vaccine mandates throughout the pandemic, dismissed the existence of Covid-19 — which he referred to as “convid” — in an October 21 Twitch livestream.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/mak-parhar-covid-symptoms-death-b1952410.html>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **Austrian chancellor expects tighter COVID rules to remain past Christmas -newspaper**

Austria's latest measures to tackle the spread of coronavirus will likely stay in force over Christmas and New Year, Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg was quoted as saying on Sunday, as the country posted a record number of infections. The country reported 9,943 new infections within a 24 hour period on Saturday, surpassing the previous worst day of Nov. 13 2020 when 9,586 cases were recorded. To stem the virus, the government said on Friday that it will bar those not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 from cafes, restaurants and hairdressers, effective Monday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/austrian-chancellor-expects-tighter-covid-rules-remain-past-christmas-newspaper-2021-11-07/>

### **Philippines' 20 month lockdown of children sparks creative playtime**

For the first time in her young life, two-year-old Nathania Ysobel Alesna was playing outside her house in the Philippine capital after 20 months of being kept at home by government coronavirus restrictions. At a department store east of Manila one recent day, Nathania giddily rode a scooter and a bike as her mother, Ruth Francine Faller, looked on.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-20-month-lockdown-children-sparks-creative-playtime-2021-11-05/>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Novavax to complete data submission to FDA by end of the year for authorization of its coronavirus vaccine**

The biotechnology company Novavax plans to submit complete data to the US Food and Drug Administration soon for possible emergency use authorization of its coronavirus vaccine, CEO Stanley Erck told CNN in a phone interview Friday.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/05/health/novavax-covid-19-vaccine-submit-data-plans-wellness>

### **Pfizer Says Covid-19 Pill Is 89% Effective in Preliminary Assessment**

Pfizer Inc. said a preliminary look at study results found that its experimental pill was highly effective at preventing people at high risk of severe Covid-19 from needing hospitalization or dying, the latest encouraging performance for an early virus treatment. The company’s drug cut the risk of hospitalization or death in study subjects with mild to moderate Covid-19 by about 89% if they took the pill within three days of diagnosis, Pfizer said Friday. The drug, called Paxlovid, was also found to be generally safe and well-tolerated in the early look at ongoing study results, the company said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizer-says-covid-19-pill-is-89-effective-in-preliminary-assessment-11636109100>

## **Autopsies on More Covid Victims Needed to Understand Virus, Scientists Say**

In an air-locked chamber in the world's largest research hospital, Daniel Chertow and a half-dozen doctors and scientists clad in astronaut-inspired protective gear are carrying out a microscopic search inside a 26-year-old man. The patient went to the hospital with chest pain in spring 2020. He didn't have typical Covid-19 symptoms, but Chertow wants to study him as part of a broader mission to understand where in the body the coronavirus goes and what it does in each of those places. If you're a Covid case in Chertow's emerging pathogens lab, you're not there for treatment; you're the subject of an autopsy.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-05/perform-more-autopsies-on-covid-victims-to-understand-virus-scientists-say>

## **Pfizer Results Open Door to New Chapter for Covid Treatments**

The world needs an easy-to-take Covid-19 treatment. Pfizer Inc.'s and Merck & Co. Inc.'s Covid pills may be just that. But questions remain about how well they will work in the real world, how safe they are and whether they will need to be taken in drug cocktails rather than alone. Pfizer's Covid pill results were hailed as remarkable Friday, the drug reduced the risk of hospitalization or death by 89% in patients. It follows a successful Covid pill trial from rival Merck in October and both drugmakers are now working to get regulatory authorization. That's left even the most skeptical doctors and scientists cheering the moment as a feat for drug development and a possible turning point in the pandemic. "Just stunning," Ashish Jha, dean of the Brown University School of Public Health, said in a tweet about the results. He added that the "implications of effective therapeutics for ending the pandemic are very, very large."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-05/pfizer-results-open-door-to-new-chapter-for-covid-treatments>

## **Oral vaccines and novel tech: CEPI announces grants for 'variant-proof' COVID-19 vaccine development**

CEPI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, has announced the first funding awards under a \$200m program to advance development of vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 variants and other betacoronaviruses.

<https://www.biopharma-reporter.com/Article/2021/11/05/Oral-vaccines-novel-tech-CEPI-grants-for-variant-proof-COVID-19-vaccines>

## **U.S. cancels multimillion-dollar deal with coronavirus vaccine maker whose plant ruined Johnson & Johnson doses**

The federal government has canceled a deal worth \$628 million with Emergent BioSolutions, the Maryland-based vaccine manufacturer that was a vanguard of the Trump administration's program to rapidly produce vaccines to counter the coronavirus pandemic. The company disclosed the development on Thursday in a conference call discussing its latest financial results. The cancellation comes after Emergent's manufacturing facilities in Baltimore were found to have produced millions of contaminated vaccine doses this spring, prompting a months-long shutdown. Emergent will forgo about \$180 million due to the contract's termination, the company said. As part of its coronavirus efforts, the federal government had invested in building additional capacity at two of the firm's sites.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2021/11/05/coronavirus-vaccine-emergent-biosolutions-cancel/>

## **Is the debate over the origin of Covid-19 still worth having?**

The ongoing rhetoric from Republican politicians about the origin of Covid-19 accomplishes nothing other than further polarizing U.S. society. The available public records show that the work done at the Wuhan Institute of Virology using U.S. government funds could not have created SARS-CoV-2. The most recent lab-leak related controversy has centered on grant-related paperwork violations. The scientific community has also been riven by unpleasant disputes. Allegations have been made that lab-leak opponents must have conflicts of interest, however nebulous. One positive outcome is

that lab-leak theory has refocused the world's virologists on an important scientific topic: gain-of-function research.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/11/05/is-debate-about-origin-of-covid-19-still-worth-having/>

### **COVID-19 vaccines more protective than 'natural' immunity**

A previous infection with SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 vaccination can provide immunity and protection against future illness. A new study has compared the level of immunity afforded by a previous infection with the protection provided by a COVID-19 vaccine. The results suggest that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are around five times more effective at preventing hospitalization than a previous infection.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/covid-19-do-vaccines-protect-better-than-infection-induced-immunity>

### **Novavax completes process for WHO emergency use approval of COVID-19 vaccine**

Vaccine developer Novavax Inc said on Thursday it has completed the submission process for emergency use listing of its COVID-19 vaccine candidate with the World Health Organization. The company submitted to the health agency all modules required for the evaluation of NVX-CoV2373, its protein-based COVID-19 vaccine, days after receiving its first emergency use authorization from Indonesia. "The first authorization of the COVID-19 vaccine... will fill a vital need for Indonesia, which is the fourth most populous nation on earth and continues to work to procure sufficient vaccine for its population," Chief Executive Stanley Erck said during an investor call.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/novavax-completes-filing-process-covid-19-vaccines-who-emergency-listing-2021-11-04/>

### **White House says it is still committed to finding COVID's origin**

The White House said on Thursday that understanding the origins of COVID-19 remains a key focus of Biden administration and that they will continue pushing for answers. "It's incredibly important for us to get to the bottom of this," said spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre. "Time is of the essence" and the U.S. and its partners will continue to fight for transparency from China.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/white-house-says-it-is-still-committed-finding-covids-origin-2021-11-04/>

### **Gene linked to doubling risk of COVID-19 death found by UK scientists**

British scientists have identified a version of a gene that may be associated with double the risk of lung failure from COVID-19, a finding that provides new insights into why some people are more susceptible than others to severe illness and which opens possibilities for targeted medicine. The high-risk genetic variant is in a chromosome region that is also tied to double the risk of death in COVID-19 patients under age 60. Around 60% of people with South Asian ancestry carry the high-risk version of the gene, researchers at Oxford University said on Friday, adding the discovery may partly explain the high number of deaths seen in some British communities, and the devastation wrought by COVID-19 in the Indian subcontinent.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/gene-linked-doubling-risk-covid-19-death-found-by-uk-scientists-2021-11-05/>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **UK reports 30305 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday, 62 deaths**

Britain reported 62 deaths on Sunday of people who had tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 28 days, and a further 30,305 new infections. The government figures show a fall from the 155 deaths and 30,693 new cases reported on Saturday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-reports-30305-new-covid-19-cases-sunday-62-deaths-2021-11-07/>

### **Rising Covid-19 Breakthrough Cases Hinder Efforts to Control Virus**

Covid-19 infections among vaccinated people are complicating the fight to bring the coronavirus under control. And in the U.K., where the path of the disease has been more closely tracked than



just about anywhere in the world, they are on the rise. Breakthroughs happen because vaccines, while still offering strong protection against severe illness and death, aren't bulletproof. The virus can still in some cases infect the body and replicate, causing illness, before the immune response can tackle it. Immunity from vaccination also wanes over time, prompting many countries, including the U.K., to roll out booster-shot campaigns.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/rising-covid-19-breakthrough-cases-hinder-efforts-to-control-virus-11636191003>

### **Ukraine COVID-19 deaths hit record amid low vaccination rate**

Ukraine's health ministry on Saturday reported a one-day record of 793 deaths from COVID-19. Ukraine has been inundated by coronavirus infections in recent weeks, putting the country's underfunded medical system under severe strain. The ministry said 25,063 new infections had been tallied over the past day; a record 27,377 were reported on Thursday. Although four different coronavirus vaccines are available in Ukraine, only 17.9% of the country's 41 million people have been fully vaccinated, the second-lowest rate in Europe after Armenia. In a bid to stem contagion, Ukrainian authorities have required teachers, government employees and other workers to get fully vaccinated by Nov. 8 or face having their salary suspended. In addition, proof of vaccination or a negative test is now required to board planes, trains and long-distance buses. Earlier this week, protesters marched in the capital of Kyiv to decry the new restrictions.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-kyiv-europe-armenia-russia-b1952852.html>

### **New infections hit record as Russia's COVID-19 wave persists**

Russia's COVID-19 cases hit another one-day record as the country struggles to contain a wave of infections and deaths that has persisted for more than a month. The national coronavirus task force on Saturday reported 41,335 new cases since the previous day, exceeding the previous daily record of 40,993 from Oct. 31. The task force said 1,188 people with COVID-19 died, just seven fewer than the daily death record reported Thursday. Officials cite Russia's low vaccination rate as a major factor in the sharp rise in cases that began in mid-September. The task force reported about 57.2 million full-course vaccinations, or less than 40% of the country's 146 million people.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-moscow-vladimir-putin-covid-people-b1952823.html>

### **New Zealand's daily coronavirus cases cross 200 for first time in pandemic**

New Zealand's 206 new daily community infections on Saturday carried it past the double-hundred mark for the first time during the coronavirus pandemic, as the nation scrambles to vaccinate its population of 5 million. The most populous city of Auckland, which reported 200 of the new cases, has lived under COVID-19 curbs for nearly three months as it battles an outbreak of the infectious Delta variant, although restrictions are expected to ease on Monday

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealands-daily-coronavirus-cases-cross-200-first-time-pandemic-2021-11-06/>

### **Covid-19 update: 206 new community cases reported today**

There have been a record 206 new community cases of Covid-19 reported in New Zealand today, as the total number of vaccinations in this country tops 7 million. There was no media conference today. In a statement, the Ministry of Health said there were 200 cases in Auckland, four in Waikato and two in Northland. The Ministry said 159 are yet to be linked to earlier cases, with 623 unlinked cases in the past 14 days. The ministry later sent through another statement saying an additional case in Northland had been confirmed. All Northland cases are close contacts of existing cases. They had all been isolating since been told they were close contacts, and as such there are no new locations of interest, Northland District Health Board said via the ministry.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/455089/covid-19-update-206-new-community-cases-reported-today>

### **Tonga recorded its first-ever COVID-19 case as Pacific charts pandemic recovery**

The main island of Tonga has gone into a week-long lockdown after the South Pacific nation reported

its very first COVID-19 case of the pandemic late last week. The COVID-positive traveler, who is fully vaccinated and was showing no symptoms, arrived in Tonga last Wednesday on a flight from Christchurch, New Zealand. All 214 others aboard the flight have tested negative and the infected traveler, a young missionary, is currently quarantined in a facility. "So far, we're very happy that nothing else has happened besides that one case," Dr. Viliami Puloka told NPR from his home in Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga. The retired general practitioner and public health specialist said it was just a matter of time before the virus reached them.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/11/05/1052393792/tonga-covid-case-countries-opening-borders-for-tourism>

### **Is the debate over the origin of Covid-19 still worth having?**

The ongoing rhetoric from Republican politicians about the origin of Covid-19 accomplishes nothing other than further polarizing U.S. society. The available public records show that the work done at the Wuhan Institute of Virology using U.S. government funds could not have created SARS-CoV-2. The most recent lab-leak related controversy has centered on grant-related paperwork violations. The scientific community has also been riven by unpleasant disputes. Allegations have been made that lab-leak opponents must have conflicts of interest, however nebulous. One positive outcome is that lab-leak theory has refocused the world's virologists on an important scientific topic: gain-of-function research.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/11/05/is-debate-about-origin-of-covid-19-still-worth-having/>

### **COVID-19 tears through generation of unvaccinated Romanian elderly**

Elderly patients gasping for air through oxygen masks in a central Romanian hospital struggled to explain why they had not been vaccinated despite easy access earlier in the coronavirus pandemic. Romania has the second lowest vaccination rate in the 27-nation European Union and one of the highest COVID-19 mortality rates in the world, with doctors warning that the pandemic is ravaging a generation of grandparents.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/covid-19-tears-through-generation-unvaccinated-romanian-elderly-2021-11-05/>

### **France's Macron to address the nation on Tuesday as COVID cases surge**

French President Emmanuel Macron will speak to the nation on Tuesday about the resurgence of COVID-19 infections as well as his economic reform programme, the government said on Friday. Infection rates have accelerated strongly in the past month, with the number of new COVID-19 cases rising by double-digit percentages from last week for several days in a row. "The epidemic is picking up speed again in Europe, Europe has again become the epicentre of the epidemic," government spokesman Gabriel Attal told reporters,

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/frances-macron-speak-nation-soon-about-covid-19-2021-11-05/>

### **UK reports 193 new COVID deaths, 34029 cases**

Britain reported 193 deaths on Friday of people who had tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 28 days, and an extra 34,029 cases. The government figures show a fall from the 214 deaths and 37,269 new cases reported on Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-reports-193-new-covid-deaths-34029-cases-2021-11-05/>

### **England's COVID prevalence steadies at highest level of the year, ONS says**

The prevalence of COVID-19 infections in England remained at around 1 in 50 people in the week ending Oct 30, a school half-term break, Britain's Office for National Statistics said on Friday, steadying at its highest level of the year. The ONS said that prevalence was unchanged from the previous week, after five straight weeks of rising infections. The ONS said that the trend was "uncertain" in the latest week, after infections had been on the rise leading up to the half term break, which for most schools started on Oct 25.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/englands-covid-prevalence-steadies-highest-level-year>

[-ons-says-2021-11-05/](#)

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Croatia tightens measures to fight spreading of COVID-19**

Amid new record-high COVID-19 daily infections Croatia decided on Friday to tighten measures against the spreading of the disease, including introducing obligatory digital certificates for public sector employees. Croatia reported 6,932 new cases of COVID-19 on Friday, the highest daily number since the beginning of the pandemic. Slightly over 50% of around four million Croats are fully vaccinated and experts largely blame a low vaccination rate for a large increase in the number of infections in recent weeks.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/croatia-tightens-measures-fight-spreading-covid-19-2021-11-05/>

### **Action needed now to avoid lockdown, say German state leaders**

Germany's COVID-19 situation is entering a very difficult period with rising numbers of intensive care patients, health minister Jens Spahn said, as German state leaders warned the country may need a new lockdown unless it takes urgent action. Spahn said he had agreed with regional health ministers that in future everyone should be offered a booster shot of COVID-19 vaccine six months after receiving their previous injection. "This should become the norm, not the exception," Spahn said at a news conference on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/action-needed-now-avoid-lockdown-say-german-state-leaders-2021-11-05/>