

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 19th Nov 2021

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Australia's Political Capital Is Almost Completely Vaccinated**

Almost all eligible citizens in Australia's "Bush Capital" have had at least one dose of Covid-19 vaccine and it is expected to reach full inoculation next month, a milestone that shows just how fast the nation has overcome a slow start to its vaccination rollout. Canberra, one of a number of highly vaccinated cities in the Asia-Pacific region, achieved the feat by relying on education and access to get its citizens to embrace the rollout, according to Andrew Barr, the chief minister of the Australian Capital Territory which oversees the city. Data show the city's vaccination rate is at 96.8% for eligible people aged 12 and over. In terms of first doses, it's given more than its population size as estimated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Barr says the real figure is likely to be around 99.9%, with just a few hundred people remaining unvaccinated. He expects a similar threshold for full inoculation to be reached by mid-December.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-18/in-australia-s-political-capital-almost-everyone-is-vaccinated>

#### **Bill Gates Says Covid Deaths May Drop to Flu Levels by Mid-2022**

Covid deaths and infection rates may dip below seasonal flu levels by the middle of next year assuming new dangerous variants don't emerge in the meantime, Bill Gates said. Between natural and vaccine immunity and emerging oral treatments, "the death rate and the disease rate ought to be coming down pretty dramatically," the billionaire founder of Microsoft Corp. said Thursday at the Bloomberg New Economy Forum in Singapore. The constraints on vaccinating the world against Covid-19 will shift next year, Gates said, as supply issues are resolved and replaced by questions of how to logistically distribute them all. "The vaccines are very good news, and the supply constraints will be largely solved as we get out in the middle of next year, and so we'll be limited by the logistics and the demand," Gates said in a virtual interview with Bloomberg News Editor-in-Chief John Micklethwait.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-18/gates-says-covid-deaths-may-drop-to-flu-levels-by-mid-2022>

#### **Prospects of Intellectual-Property Waiver on Covid-19 Vaccines Fade**

An agreement to waive the intellectual-property rights underpinning Covid-19 vaccines—a prospect poor countries have hoped would ease supplies to the developing world—is becoming increasingly unlikely, say people familiar with the situation, with the U.S. not acting to bridge disagreements between developing world countries and those opposing such a measure. In May, the Biden administration said it would support temporarily suspending patents and other IP linked to the shots to allow developing countries to produce the Covid-19 vaccines created by big drug companies. The U.S. was under pressure to help get vaccines to poor countries, which have suffered severe shortages. Confirmed deaths from Covid-19 in the developing world have far outstripped those in rich countries this year.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/prospects-of-intellectual-property-waiver-on-covid-19-vaccines-fade-11637251190>

#### **New Reconstruction Points to Animal Origins for Covid-19**

A scientist known for investigating viral origins has reconstructed the first known weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic, adding to a growing body of evidence that the virus behind it jumped from infected animals to humans rather than emerging from laboratory research. In a paper published Thursday in the academic journal Science, Michael Worobey concludes a wholesale seafood market

in Wuhan, China, where live mammals were sold is very likely to be the site of the origin of the pandemic. The precise role of the Huanan market in the pandemic has been debated by scientists. Dr. Worobey, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Arizona who previously unearthed clues about the origins of the 1918 pandemic flu and HIV, showed that most of the known Covid-19 cases in December 2019 had a direct or indirect link to the Huanan market. These infected people worked at the market, visited it, had contact with someone who was there or lived nearby, he found by piecing together genetic data, reports and accounts of early patients.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/new-reconstruction-points-to-animal-origins-for-covid-19-11637262041>

### **Germany to limit public life for the unvaccinated**

Germany will limit large parts of public life in areas where hospitals are becoming dangerously full of COVID-19 patients to those who have either been vaccinated or have recovered from the illness, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Thursday. The move is necessary to tackle a "very worrying" fourth wave of the pandemic that is overburdening hospitals, she said. "Many of the measures that are now needed would not have been needed if more people were vaccinated. And it isn't too late to get vaccinated now," Merkel said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-region-hardest-hit-by-covid-surge-plans-partial-lockdown-report-2021-11-18/>

### **India allows export of 20 mln Novavax vaccine doses to Indonesia -document, source**

India has approved the export of 20 million doses of the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine made by the Serum Institute of India (SII) to Indonesia, according to a government document seen by Reuters and a government source.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/india-allows-export-20-mln-novavax-vaccine-doses-indonesia-document-source-2021-11-18/>

### **Macron says France will not need to lockdown non-vaccinated people as COVID spreads**

France does not need to follow those European countries imposing COVID-19 lockdowns on unvaccinated people, because of the success of its health pass in curbing the virus' spread, President Emmanuel Macron said. Europe has again become the epicentre of the pandemic, prompting some countries including Germany and Austria to reintroduce restrictions in the run-up to Christmas and causing debate over whether vaccines alone are enough to tame COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/macron-says-france-will-not-need-lockdown-non-vaccinated-people-covid-spreads-2021-11-18/>

### **Ardern's Covid lockdown finds favour as New Zealand watches Sydney's Delta disaster**

The loudest overseas critics of its elimination approach have been mostly greeted with bemusement or defiance. New Zealanders have consistently supported even the toughest anti-Covid measures. About 80% rated the government's Covid-19 response as overall good, according to polling commissioned by the Spinoff in February, and 59% rated the response as "excellent". The satirical hashtag #NZhellhole, which pokes fun at some of the more hysterical reactions to NZ lockdowns, was again trending on Wednesday. "If [overseas commentators] are surprised then they haven't been paying attention," says Dr Siouxsie Wiles, one of the country's prominent epidemic communicators. In New Zealand, Wiles says, "the vast majority of people understand what we are up against, and are supportive of our response."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/18/arderns-covid-lockdown-finds-favour-as-new-zealand-watches-sydneys-delta-disaster>

### **'Life back to normal': More COVID-19 curbs eased in Melbourne**

Melbourne's pubs and cafes can have unlimited patrons from Thursday night, while stadiums can return to full capacity as authorities lifted nearly all remaining COVID-19 restrictions for the vaccinated residents in Australia's second-largest city. Victoria, the state that is home to Melbourne,

has been gradually easing curbs when dual-dose inoculations reached 70%, 80% and 90%, with the latest relaxations part of a shift in strategy towards living with the coronavirus. The full vaccination level for the eligible population is expected to reach 90% over the weekend.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/life-back-normal-more-covid-19-curbs-eased-melbourne-2021-11-18/>

### **Mask-wearing cuts Covid incidence by 53%, says global study**

Mask-wearing is the single most effective public health measure at tackling Covid, reducing incidence by 53%, the first global study of its kind shows. Vaccines are safe and effective and saving lives around the world. But most do not confer 100% protection, most countries have not vaccinated everyone, and it is not yet known if jabs will prevent future transmission of emerging coronavirus variants. Globally, Covid cases exceeded 250 million this month. The virus is still infecting 50 million people worldwide every 90 days due to the highly transmissible Delta variant, with thousands dying each day. Now a systematic review and meta analysis of non-pharmaceutical interventions has found for the first time that mask wearing, social distancing and handwashing are all effective measures at curbing cases - with mask wearing the most effective.

[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/17/wearing-masks-single-most-effective-way-to-tackle-covid-study-finds?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/17/wearing-masks-single-most-effective-way-to-tackle-covid-study-finds?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other)

### **Portugal's Madeira Island Imposes Curbs on Unvaccinated People**

The Portuguese island of Madeira will impose new restrictions on unvaccinated residents and visitors amid a surge in coronavirus cases across Europe. People who have not been vaccinated will be banned from attending public events such as concerts from Saturday, Miguel Albuquerque, the president of Madeira's regional government, said in a televised press conference on Thursday. Unvaccinated people are allowed to attend mass or go to the supermarket as long as they show a negative Covid-19 test. The use of masks will become mandatory in public spaces. Mass testing will also be carried out on a weekly basis to try to contain the spread of the virus, Albuquerque said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-18/portugal-s-madeira-island-imposes-curbs-on-unvaccinated-people>

### **Greece Is the Latest European Country to Restrict the Unvaccinated**

Greece will tighten restrictions on people unvaccinated against the coronavirus as rising cases and hospitalizations strain the nation's health systems. It joins Germany, Austria and other European countries in attempting to pressure more people into getting their inoculations. "Even those who are still hesitant can change their minds by listening to what the unvaccinated who get sick have to say," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a televised national address on Thursday. Almost nine out of every 10 people in Greek ICUs with Covid-19 are unvaccinated, he said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-18/greece-is-the-latest-european-country-to-restrict-unvaccinated>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **U.S. to buy 10 mln courses of Pfizer's COVID-19 pill for \$5.3 bln**

Pfizer Inc said the U.S. government would pay \$5.29 billion for 10 million courses of its experimental COVID-19 antiviral drug, as the country rushes to secure promising oral treatments for the disease. The deal is for around twice as many treatment courses as Merck & Co Inc has agreed to supply the United States under its contract. The price for the Pfizer pill is nearly 25% lower at roughly \$530 per course, compared with about \$700 for Merck's.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-govt-buy-10-mln-courses-pfizers-covid-19-pill-529-bl-2021-11-18/>

### **Rollout of third Covid jabs in England condemned as 'shambolic'**

A "shambolic" rollout of third Covid vaccinations has left an unknown number of immunocompromised people still without proper protection going into winter, and in other cases

even given the wrong type of injection, a leading charity has said. Blood Cancer UK said poor planning and confusing messaging meant “many thousands” of people with weakened immune systems might have missed out, leaving them at greater risk of serious consequences if they catch Covid. In a lengthy statement, the charity said NHS England had repeatedly failed to acknowledge the problem, while Sajid Javid, the health secretary, incorrectly said more than six weeks ago that the “vast, vast majority” of eligible people had already been invited for a third jab.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/nov/18/rollout-third-covid-jabs-england-condemned-shambolic>

### **Dutch start coronavirus vaccine booster campaign with the over 80s**

The Netherlands started its coronavirus booster vaccination campaign on Thursday, with the over 80s and hospital staff first in line for the top-up jab. The government had planned to roll out the campaign in December but brought it forward two weeks under pressure from both MPs and healthcare experts. Under current government strategy, everyone over the age of 60 will be invited for a booster jab, as will everyone living in residential care and front-line staff. The government decided to back booster jabs following reports which show the efficacy of vaccines does go down among older people over time. Some 44% of current coronavirus hospital patients have been vaccinated but by far the majority are over the age of 70.

<https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2021/11/dutch-start-coronavirus-vaccine-booster-campaign-with-the-over-80s/>

### **Spain expands booster shot programme as COVID-19 cases rise**

Spain is now offering third doses of COVID-19 vaccines to people aged 60 and over, expanding the booster shot programme from the previous age threshold of 70 as infections rise, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Wednesday. Spain has fully vaccinated 79% of its population, and started the campaign to administer booster shots last month, including for cancer patients, nursing home residents and other vulnerable groups.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spain-expands-booster-shot-programme-covid-19-cases-rise-2021-11-17/>

### **Vaccine mandates should cover the incarcerated, too, not just prison guards and workers**

Federal, state, and local vaccine mandates are being opposed by several high-profile groups, including firefighters, nurses, and corrections officers. Opposition of the latter to vaccine mandates highlights an illogical situation that has developed with little discussion: To date, neither the federal government nor any state or municipality has officially mandated the jab for their incarcerated populations. That doesn't make sense: Prisoners, who are at higher risk for infection and death than corrections officers, aren't required to get vaccinated while corrections officers, who are at lower risk, are being told they must get vaccinated. In New York, corrections officers marched across the Brooklyn Bridge in late October to protest New York City's vaccine mandate. About 40% of Massachusetts prison guards aren't vaccinated, and they lost their latest bid to not comply with the state's vaccine mandate. In Connecticut, where I was once incarcerated, almost one-third of employees resisting vaccination are corrections officers.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/11/18/vaccine-mandates-should-cover-inmates-too-not-just-prison-guards-and-workers/>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **The Australian Open's Vaccine Mandate Could Keep Novak Djokovic at Home**

When Novak Djokovic won the Paris Masters this month, he rounded out a tennis season for the ages. Not only did he win three major titles to join Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal at 20 apiece—he also surpassed Nadal's mark for Masters titles, and finished as world No. 1 for a record seventh straight season. But if his 2021 ended with an exclamation mark, 2022 will open with a question: Will Djokovic play at the Australian Open? The doubts aren't due to any injury or dip in form—in fact, Djokovic is playing some of the best tennis of his life. Instead, he is on a collision course with Australian vaccine mandates. Local officials have said that they want this to be the first Grand Slam

tournament to require that all participants be vaccinated against Covid-19, without a quarantine option for unvaccinated players.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/australian-open-vaccine-mandate-novak-djokovic-11636678301>

### **Scott Morrison demands states like Queensland drop Covid-19 vaccine mandates**

Queensland will introduce job passports to enter hospitality venues next month. Scott Morrison has said job mandates should not be in place to enter venues. Mandatory jobs should only apply to healthcare workers, he said on Thursday. It comes as Prime Minister faces pressure from pro-choice MPs in his party

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10214777/Scott-Morrison-demands-states-like-Queensland-drop-Covid-19-vaccine-mandates.html>

### **Novak Djokovic insists 'freedom of choice essential' on Covid vaccine**

World number one Novak Djokovic has reiterated his stand about freedom of choice over taking the Covid vaccine as suspense grows over his participation at the Australian Open in January. Serbian Djokovic has repeatedly declined to disclose his vaccination status and said last month that he was unsure if he would defend his title at Melbourne Park, "things being as they are". Government officials of the state of Victoria, where the major takes place in Melbourne, have said unvaccinated players will be barred from the tournament.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/novak-djokovic-covid-vaccine-australian-open-b1959908.html>

### **Florida GOP limits vaccine mandates, flouting White House**

Florida Republicans approved a sweeping bill Wednesday to hobble coronavirus vaccine mandates in businesses, rejecting claims that they were sacrificing public health to hand Gov. Ron DeSantis a win in his fight against White House virus rules. Lawmakers in the GOP-controlled statehouse expedited the measure, along with a package of virus bills, after hours of debate in which Republicans maintained they were protecting workers from onerous mandates by the federal government. "If you want to get a vaccine, you can get a vaccine. If you don't want to get a vaccine, you can choose not to get a vaccine," said Sen. Danny Burgess, a Republican. "That's the entire purpose of this bill, trusting Floridians and allowing us to make that choice for ourselves."

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-florida-public-health-ron-desantis-126f725978a0bc6cf53b15f23a660f2d>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Canada to authorize use of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for children -source**

Canada will announce as expected on Friday it is authorizing the use of Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11, a government source said on Thursday. The decision will make it the first shot for young children in Canada. Officials had made clear for weeks that the decision would be favorable, noting that incidences of COVID-19 are now highest in those under 12. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said last month that Ottawa had signed a deal with Pfizer to quickly receive 2.9 million doses of the vaccine once it was approved.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/canada-authorize-use-pfizers-covid-19-vaccine-children-source-2021-11-12/>

### **'Zero-Covid is not going to happen': experts predict a steep rise in US cases this winter**

A steep rise in Covid-19 cases in Europe should serve as a warning that the US could also see significant increases in coronavirus cases this winter, particularly in the nation's colder regions, scientists say. However, there is more cause for optimism as America enters its second pandemic winter, even in the face of likely rises in cases. Evidence shows vaccine-conferred protection against hospitalization and death remains high several months after inoculation, vaccines for children older than five can reduce Covid transmission, and new antiviral medications hold the promise of making

Covid-19 a treatable disease.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/18/zero-covid-experts-predict-rise-us-cases-winter>

### **AstraZeneca's antibody drug over 80% effective at preventing Covid, trial shows**

The data showed that patients given a single injection of the antibody treatment were 83% less likely to develop symptomatic cases of the coronavirus than participants who were given a placebo. Around 2% of the world's population is thought to be at risk of not responding well to Covid-19 vaccines, according to AstraZeneca. In a separate trial, patients with mild-to-moderate Covid-19 who were given one dose of AZD7442 within three days of developing symptoms had their risk of developing severe disease reduced by 88%.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/18/astrazeneca-antibody-drug-83percent-effective-at-preventing-covid-trial.html>

### **Pfizer, U.S. ink \$5.29 deal over possible COVID-19 treatment**

The U.S. government will pay drugmaker Pfizer \$5.29 billion for 10 million treatment courses of its potential COVID-19 treatment if regulators approve it. Pfizer asked the Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday to authorize the experimental pill, which has been shown to significantly cut the rate of hospitalizations and deaths among people with coronavirus infections. The FDA is already reviewing a competing pill from Merck and will hold a public meeting on it later this month. The price for Pfizer's potential treatment amounts to about \$529 per course. The U.S. has already agreed to pay roughly \$700 per course of Merck's drug for about 1.7 million treatments.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pfizer-covid-new-york-food-and-drug-administration-merck-b1960062.html>

### **Moderna seeks U.S. authorization of COVID-19 booster shots for all adults**

Moderna Inc said on Wednesday it had applied with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for authorization of its COVID-19 booster vaccine for all adults aged 18 and older. The FDA has cleared booster shots of COVID-19 vaccines for people who are immunocompromised, those aged 65 and older and for individuals at high risk of severe disease or who are regularly exposed to the virus. Moderna is seeking authorization for a 50-microgram booster dose, half the strength of its original vaccine given in two shots about four weeks apart.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-applies-us-authorization-covid-19-vaccine-boosters-adults-2021-11-17/>

### **UK study suggests Delta subvariant less likely to cause symptoms**

A subvariant of Delta that is growing in Britain is less likely to lead to symptomatic COVID-19 infection, a coronavirus prevalence survey found, adding that overall cases had dropped from a peak in October. The Imperial College London REACT-1 study, released on Thursday, found that the subvariant, known as AY.4.2, had grown to be nearly 12% of samples sequenced, but only a third had "classic" COVID symptoms, compared with nearly a half of those with the currently dominant Delta lineage AY.4. Two-thirds of people with AY.4.2 had "any" symptom, compared with more than three-quarters with AY.4.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/uk-study-suggests-delta-subvariant-less-likely-cause-symptoms-2021-11-18/>

### **Pfizer signs \$5.3 billion U.S. deal to supply COVID-19 antiviral pills**

Pfizer Inc said the U.S. government would pay \$5.29 billion for 10 million courses of its experimental COVID-19 antiviral drug, as the country rushes to secure promising oral treatments for the disease. The deal is for around twice as many treatment courses as Merck & Co Inc has agreed to supply the United States under its contract. The price for the Pfizer pill is nearly 25% lower at roughly \$530 per course, compared with about \$700 for Merck's.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-govt-buy-10-mln-courses-pfizers-covid-19-pill-529-blm-2021-11-18/>

### **AstraZeneca's preventative COVID-19 shot shown to work longer-term**

AstraZeneca cemented its lead in bringing a preventative COVID-19 shot to market, saying its antibody cocktail offered 83% protection over six months, providing another possible weapon in the fight against the pandemic. The therapy, called AZD7442 or Evusheld, had previously been shown to confer 77% protection against symptomatic illness after three months, in an earlier readout of the late-stage PROVENT trial in August.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/astrazeneca-antibody-works-prevent-treat-covid-19-longer-term-studies-2021-11-18/>

### **EU assesses GSK-Vir COVID-19 antibody therapy for authorisation**

European health regulator said on Thursday it was assessing a marketing authorisation application for GSK-Vir Biotechnology's, monoclonal antibody treatment for COVID-19 and could give its opinion within two months. The drug, sotrovimab, branded as Xevudy was already under a speedy review by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), and GSK's application makes the drug the fourth application currently under EU lenses for the treatment of COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-assessing-gsk-vir-monoclonal-antibody-covid-19-treatment-2021-11-18/>

### **Antibody protection after mild COVID-19 may not last; an estimated 100 mln people have had long COVID**

The following is a summary of some recent studies on COVID-19. They include research that warrants further study to corroborate the findings and that has yet to be certified by peer review. Antibody protection from mild COVID-19 may not last Nearly everyone who had a mild case of COVID-19 still has antibodies to the coronavirus a year later, but that might not protect them from new variants, a small study suggests. Among 43 Australians who dealt with mild COVID-19 early in the pandemic, 90% still had antibodies 12 months later.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/antibody-protection-after-mild-covid-19-may-not-last-a-n-estimated-100-mln-people-2021-11-17/>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **New Mexico facing 'serious problems' amid latest COVID-19 surge, health officials warn**

COVID-19 cases in New Mexico are "trending in a worrisome direction," health officials said this week, as they called on residents to get vaccinated amid the surge. New Mexico reported 1,530 new cases and 539 hospitalizations Wednesday, rivaling numbers last seen in December and January, during the state's last COVID-19 wave. "Things are not going well in our hospitals," Dr. David Scrase, acting cabinet secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health, said during a COVID-19 briefing Wednesday, noting the state is "facing some very serious problems," including with intensive care unit capacity.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/mexico-facing-problems-amid-latest-covid-19-surge/story?id=81210830>

### **Record high cases, more rules and partial lockdowns: A new Covid wave engulfs Europe**

The latest wave of Covid cases is hitting Europe with a vengeance. Some countries have responded by imposing partial lockdowns and placing more restrictions on unvaccinated people. Germany shattered a new record on Thursday, reporting more than 65,000 new cases. Some German health officials are warning that the true number of cases could be two or three times as many.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/18/covid-record-breaking-cases-as-europes-latest-wave-takes-hold.html>

### **COVID-19: Germany considers restrictions for unvaccinated people amid warning of 'really terrible Christmas' as cases surge**

The head of Germany's disease control agency has warned that the country faces a "really terrible Christmas" unless steps are taken to counter the sharp rise in coronavirus infections. "We are

currently heading toward a serious emergency," the director of the Robert Koch Institute, Lothar Wieler, said. "We are going to have a really terrible Christmas if we don't take countermeasures now."

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-germany-considers-restrictions-for-unvaccinated-people-amid-warning-of-really-terrible-christmas-as-cases-surge-12471325>

### **Brazil sees 11977 new coronavirus cases, 373 deaths**

Brazil registered 11,977 new coronavirus cases and 373 COVID-19 deaths in the last 24 hours, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/brazil-sees-11977-new-coronavirus-cases-373-deaths-2021-11-17/>

### **S.Korea reports record new COVID-19 cases as serious infections cause worry**

South Korea reported a record high 3,292 new COVID-19 cases, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) said on Thursday, as the country moves into the first phase of its "living with COVID-19" with loosened restrictions. A rise in cases was predicted by officials and experts after many social distancing restrictions were lifted earlier this month after the country surpassed its goal of vaccinating 70% of its 52 million people. More than 78.5% are now fully vaccinated, including more than 90% of adults.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-reports-record-new-covid-19-cases-serious-infections-cause-worry-2021-11-18/>

### **Russia's daily COVID-19 deaths hit new record high**

Russia on Thursday reported 1,251 coronavirus-related deaths in the last 24 hours, an all-time record high that follows a surge in cases. The government coronavirus taskforce reported 37,374 nationwide infections, down from a peak of 41,335 recorded on Nov. 6.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-daily-covid-19-deaths-hit-new-record-high-2021-11-18/>

### **French new coronavirus cases top 20000 per day for first time since August**

France registered more than 20,000 new confirmed coronavirus infections on Wednesday for the first time since Aug. 25 as the fifth wave of the epidemic picked up speed. The health ministry reported 20,294 new COVID-19 cases, taking the total to 7.33 million and the seven-day moving average of new cases to above 12,400.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/french-new-coronavirus-cases-over-20000-per-day-first-time-since-august-2021-11-17/>

### **Greece calls up private doctors as COVID-19 cases surge**

Greece on Thursday ordered private sector doctors in five regions in the north of the country to assist its health system as it grapples with a surge in COVID-19 infections. The government had called on private sector doctors to help out earlier this month, as Greece's public hospitals and intensive care wards have been overwhelmed by rising infections in recent weeks. The requisition order, published in the official government gazette, is effective for a month.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/greece-calls-up-private-doctors-covid-19-cases-surge-2021-11-18/>

### **Dutch weigh options to slow rising COVID-19 infections among children**

Virologists in the Netherlands have proposed extending holidays over Christmas to slow a surge in COVID-19 cases among children that has forced half of schools nationwide to send classes home, but the government said it wanted to keep them open. The National Institute for Health (RIVM) reported a record number of over 110,000 cases in the week to Nov. 16, an increase of 44% from the previous seven days. The strongest rise was among children aged 4-12.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/dutch-weigh-options-slow-rising-covid-19-infections-among-children-2021-11-18/>

### **Belgium extends mask use, enforces home working as COVID-19 spikes**

Belgium tightened its coronavirus restrictions on Wednesday, mandating wider use of masks and enforcing work from home, as cases spiked in the country's fourth COVID-19 wave. From Saturday, all people in indoor venues such as cafes and restaurants will need to wear a mask unless seated and the rule will apply to those aged 10 or older. The previous age threshold was 12. Nightclubs may have to test their guests if they want to let them dance mask-free. People wanting to eat in a restaurant or go to the theatre already must present a COVID pass, showing vaccination, a negative test or recent recovery.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/belgium-extends-mask-use-enforces-home-working-covid-19-spikes-2021-11-17/>

### **LA mayor, recovered from COVID, warns of winter virus surge**

Mayor Eric Garcetti, who just returned from quarantine overseas after developing COVID-19 in Scotland, warned Wednesday that a coronavirus surge was likely during the upcoming holiday season and urged residents to get vaccinated to keep case numbers and hospitalizations down. "The answer to who should get the vaccine is simple: everyone," Garcetti said. "If you have family members who are coming for Thanksgiving or Christmas or the holidays, get them vaccinated." Garcetti noted that vaccination protection diminishes over time and used himself as an example of a breakthrough infection. The mayor said he had put off getting a booster shot and came down with COVID-19 while attending a United Nations climate conference in the United Kingdom.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-europe-los-angeles-united-kingdom-924769bc358bcbc6d84eb2c7ca311852>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Austria's focus shifts to full lockdown as COVID-19 cases keep rising**

Pressure on Austria's government to impose a full COVID-19 lockdown grew on Thursday as its worst-hit provinces said they would adopt the measure for themselves since infections are still rising despite the current lockdown for the unvaccinated. Roughly 66% of Austria's population is fully vaccinated, one of the lowest rates in western Europe. Its infections are among the highest on the continent, with a seven-day incidence of 971.5 per 100,000 people. As winter approaches, cases have surged across Europe, prompting governments to consider reimposing unpopular lockdowns. The Netherlands has imposed a partial lockdown that applies to all, but Austria has sought not to impose extra restrictions on the fully vaccinated.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/austrian-covid-19-cases-keep-rising-provinces-prepare-full-lockdown-2021-11-18/>

### **German region hardest hit by COVID surge plans partial lockdown -report**

Germany will limit large parts of public life in areas where hospitals are becoming dangerously full of COVID-19 patients to those who have either been vaccinated or have recovered from the illness, a document showed. National and regional leaders meeting on Thursday agreed the measure as part of their response to the fourth wave of the pandemic that is raging in Germany, overburdening hospitals in some areas. In places where hospitalisation rates exceed a certain threshold, access to public, cultural and sports events and to restaurants will be restricted to those who have been vaccinated or who have recovered, according to the document seen by Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/german-region-hardest-hit-by-covid-surge-plans-partial-lockdown-report-2021-11-18/>