

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 22nd Nov 2021

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Singapore relaxes tight COVID-19 social curbs from Monday**

Singapore's government is easing some of the tight social curbs it imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19, after infections stabilised in the city-state over the past month. From Monday, limits on social interactions and dining out will be expanded to five people from the current rule of up to two vaccinated people, government ministers told a news conference on Saturday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/singapore-relaxes-tight-covid-19-social-curbs-monday-2021-11-20/>

#### **COVID surge in Europe shows 'critical' need to vaccinate millions still not jabbed in UK, SAGE expert warns**

Spiking coronavirus infections across Europe show the "critical" need for people in the UK get vaccinated, a government scientific adviser has told Sky News. Soaring cases on the continent underlined "how quickly things can go wrong", said Professor John Edmunds, who pointed out there were still "many millions" across Britain, who were still not fully vaccinated while some had not had any COVID-19 shots. His comments came as a number of European countries wrestle with a resurgence of the coronavirus.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-surge-in-europe-shows-critical-need-to-vaccinate-millions-still-not-jabbed-in-uk-government-expert-warns-12473210>

#### **Austria imposes full COVID lockdown, makes vaccination mandatory**

Austria will become the first country in Western Europe to reimpose a full coronavirus lockdown to tackle a new wave of infections and will require its whole population to be vaccinated by February, its government has said. Friday's announcement came as roughly two-thirds of Austria's population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, one of the lowest rates in western Europe. The country's infection rate is among the highest on the continent, with a seven-day incidence of 991 per 100,000 people. Austria had introduced a lockdown for all those who were unvaccinated on Monday but since then, infections have set new records.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/19/austria-to-enter-lockdown-bring-in-mandatory-vaccinations>

#### **Scientists mystified, wary, as Africa avoids COVID disaster**

There is something "mysterious" going on in Africa that is puzzling scientists, said Wafaa El-Sadr, chair of global health at Columbia University. "Africa doesn't have the vaccines and the resources to fight COVID-19 that they have in Europe and the U.S., but somehow they seem to be doing better," she said. Fewer than 6% of people in Africa are vaccinated. For months, the WHO has described Africa as "one of the least affected regions in the world" in its weekly pandemic reports.

<https://apnews.com/fcf28a83c9352a67e50aa2172eb01a2f>

#### **Covid Surge May Be New Year Market Risk Missed by Strategists**

A fresh blast of the pandemic may be catching traders and investment strategists off guard. As countries throughout Europe announce new restrictions going as far as full lockdowns, research notes outlining risks and opportunities for 2022 appear to completely ignore the virus. The word "lockdown" isn't even mentioned in year-ahead outlooks for Europe circulated by Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley. Meanwhile, in a Bank of America Corp. survey this week, fund managers saw Covid-19 as only the fifth-biggest tail risk, with just 5% expressing concern about its potential impact on markets. Inflation, central bank rate hikes, stalling Chinese growth and asset

bubbles topped the list.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-19/virus-may-prove-elephant-in-the-room-that-strategists-missed>

### **COVID comeback threatens fresh setback for European market bulls**

COVID-19 lockdowns have returned anew to haunt Europe's economic prospects, forcing investors on Friday to reassess portfolios and sell vulnerable assets such as the euro and bank stocks. Days after the Netherlands, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic reimposed curbs, Austria put itself back under lockdown and Germany's health minister refused to rule out one.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/covid-comeback-threatens-fresh-setback-european-market-bulls-2021-11-19/>

### **Philippines to reopen 'soon' to vaccinated foreign tourists**

The Philippines has approved a plan to allow entry soon to foreign tourists vaccinated against COVID-19, its tourism ministry said on Friday, following moves by other Southeast Asian countries to relax travel curbs. The coronavirus task force "approved in principle the entry of fully vaccinated tourists" from countries with low COVID-19 cases, the ministry said, adding that guidelines must be finalised.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/philippines-reopen-soon-vaccinated-foreign-tourists-2021-11-19/>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Hong Kong authorises Sinovac vaccine for children aged 3-17**

Hong Kong has approved lowering the age limit for the COVID-19 vaccine from China's Sinovac Biotech (SVA.O) to three years old, down from 18 years of age, as it pursues a broader campaign to incentivise its 7.5 million residents to get vaccinated. "Adolescents aged 12 to 17 will be accorded priority to receive the CoronaVac vaccine, with a view to extending to children of a younger age group at a later stage," Hong Kong's Secretary for Food and Health (SFH) Sophia Chan said in a statement published on Saturday.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/hong-kong-authorises-sinovac-vaccine-children-aged-3-17-2021-11-20/>

### **China has given 76.3% of population complete COVID-19 vaccine doses**

China had given 76.3% of its population complete COVID-19 vaccine doses by Nov. 19, Wu Liangyou, an official at the National Health Commission (NHC) said on Saturday. A total of 1.076 billion people in the country have received the required number of doses for their COVID vaccination, the NHC spokesperson Mi Feng said in a news briefing. A total of 65.73 million people have received a booster vaccine dose, Wu said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/china-has-given-763-population-complete-covid-19-vaccine-doses-2021-11-20/>

### **Europe is learning a crucial lesson -- vaccines work, but they alone won't stop Covid now**

As Western Europe's vaccination rollout gained strength in the early part of 2021, many of the region's leaders touted the shots as their immediate route out of the pandemic. Press conferences took on an almost celebratory tone as Presidents, Prime Ministers and Chancellors announced road maps away from Covid-19 restrictions, hailing their country's uptake rates and speaking colorfully about a return to normalcy. But as another Covid-struck winter grips Europe, many of those countries are now reversing course. Ireland introduced a midnight curfew on the hospitality industry earlier this week amid a surge in cases, despite having one of Europe's best vaccination rates. In Portugal -- the envy of the continent, where 87% of the total population is inoculated -- the government is mulling new measures as infections inch upwards.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/19/europe/europe-covid-vaccination-rates-fourth-wave-cmd-intl/index.html>

### **All players must be vaccinated for Australian Open - tournament chief**

All players at the Australian Open must be vaccinated, tournament chief Craig Tiley confirmed

Saturday, piling more pressure on world number one Novak Djokovic, who has refused to reveal if he has been inoculated. Melbourne, where January's Grand Slam is held, has spent more than 260 days under lockdown during the pandemic and the government of the state of Victoria made clear last month there would be no concessions for unvaccinated players. Tiley said the playing group know they must get the jab to compete at Melbourne Park. "There's a lot of speculation about vaccination and just to be really clear, when the (Victoria) premier announced that everyone on site... will need to be vaccinated, we made that clear to the playing group," he told Channel Nine television.

<https://news.yahoo.com/players-must-vaccinated-australian-open-034051588.html>

### **Why can't some COVID-19 vaccinated people travel to the US?**

Why can't some COVID-19 vaccinated people travel to the U.S.? Because they might not be vaccinated with shots recognized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or the World Health Organization. When lifting overseas travel restrictions in November, the U.S. required adults coming to the country to be fully vaccinated with shots approved or authorized by the FDA or allowed by WHO. Among the most widely used vaccines that don't meet that criteria are Russia's Sputnik V vaccine and China's CanSino vaccine. Sputnik V is authorized for use in more than 70 countries while CanSino is allowed in at least nine countries. WHO still is awaiting more data about both vaccines before making a decision.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-lifestyle-health-united-nations-world-health-organization-9da5e27bee11d7759c1d0515e098a1d9>

### **Virus surge worsens in Midwest as states expand boosters**

A surge in cases in the Upper Midwest has some Michigan schools keeping students at home ahead of Thanksgiving and the military sending medical teams to Minnesota to relieve hospital staffs overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients. The worsening outlook in the Midwest comes as booster shots are being made available to everyone in a growing number of locations. Massachusetts and Utah became the latest to say anyone 18 or older can roll up a sleeve for a booster shots, and an advisory committee for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is meeting Friday to discuss expanding boosters. Cold weather states are dominating the fresh wave of cases over the last seven days, including New Hampshire, North Dakota and Wisconsin, according to federal data. But the Southwest had trouble spots, too, with more than 90% of inpatient hospital beds occupied in Arizona.

<https://apnews.com/9a8d95fe86d02245cd9d4a5911f6a6bb>

### **Singapore's Covid Cases Stabilize Ahead of Curbs Deadline**

Singapore will relax some virus-related curbs from Monday, allowing five people from different households to sit together at restaurants, although ministers cautioned against expecting any more major easing this year. "We are now transiting towards living with Covid-19 and I know many or some prefer to open up more quickly, but we must do so in a very careful and step-by-step manner," Minister for Trade and Industry Gan Kim Yong said at a multi-ministry task force briefing on Saturday. Singapore will also increase the limit on social gatherings to five people from two, and visits to hospitals and residential care homes will be extended to those who are medically ineligible for vaccination from Dec. 1.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-20/singapore-s-covid-cases-stabilize-ahead-of-curbs-deadline>

### **Lord Lloyd Webber: Vaccine passports are a small price to pay to avoid more lockdowns**

Speaking exclusively to Nick Ferrari at Breakfast, Lord Lloyd Webber said people are "determined" to go out and enjoy themselves following months trapped inside due to Covid lockdowns. It comes as the Scottish Government is considering expanding the scheme to cinemas and other hospitality venues, such as theatres, with a final decision due on Tuesday. Lord Lloyd Webber, who was asked by Nick what he thought of the news, said it is a "small price to pay".

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Two in hospital after police fire on Dutch COVID-19 protesters**

Two people were being treated in hospital in the Dutch city of Rotterdam on Saturday after they were seriously injured when police fired shots during a violent protest against COVID-19 measures, authorities said. Crowds of several hundred rioters torched cars, set off fireworks and threw rocks at police during the protests on Friday evening. Police responded with warning shots and water canons. Rotterdam police said on Twitter Saturday that 51 people had been arrested, half of whom were under 18.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/rotterdam-mayor-slams-violent-covid-19-protests-scores-arrested-2021-11-20/>

### **Tens of thousands march in Vienna against COVID measures before lockdown**

Tens of thousands of people, many of them far-right supporters, protested in Vienna on Saturday against coronavirus restrictions a day after Austria's government announced a new lockdown and said vaccines would be made compulsory next year. Whistling, blowing horns and banging drums, crowds streamed into Heroes' Square in front of the Hofburg, the former imperial palace in central Vienna, in the early afternoon, one of several protest locations.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/thousands-protest-vienna-against-covid-restrictions-before-lockdown-2021-11-20/>

### **Two wounded as Dutch police fire shots at protest over new COVID-19 restrictions**

Crowds of rioters in the port city of Rotterdam torched cars and threw rocks at police who responded with shots and water canon, as protests against COVID-19 measures turned violent on Friday night. "We fired warning shots and there were also direct shots fired because the situation was life-threatening," police spokesperson Patricia Wessels told Reuters. "We know that at least two people were wounded, probably as a result of the warning shots, but we need to investigate the exact causes further," she said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/dutch-police-fire-warning-shots-during-riots-over-covid-19-measures-2021-11-19/>

### **Austria infuriates many with full lockdown as Germany warns it may follow suit**

Austria will become the first country in western Europe to reimpose a full COVID-19 lockdown, it said on Friday as neighbouring Germany warned it may follow suit, sending shivers through financial markets worried about the economic fallout. Europe has again become the epicentre of the pandemic, accounting for half of global cases and deaths. A fourth wave of infections has plunged Germany, Europe's largest economy, into a national emergency, Health Minister Jens Spahn said, warning that vaccinations alone will not cut case numbers.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/austria-imposes-full-lockdown-germany-may-follow-covid-grips-europe-2021-11-19/>

### **Dutch police fire warning shots as COVID protests rock Rotterdam**

Dutch police opened fire on protesters and seven people were injured in rioting that erupted in downtown Rotterdam at a demonstration against recently introduced COVID-19 restrictions and government plans to restrict access for unvaccinated people to some venues. The Dutch city's Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb told reporters in the early hours of Saturday morning that "on a number of occasions the police felt it necessary to draw their weapons to defend themselves" as rioters ran rampage through the port city's central shopping district, setting fires and throwing rocks and fireworks at officers in what Aboutaleb called "an orgy of violence". "[The police] shot at protesters, people were injured," Aboutaleb said. He did not have details on the injuries. Police also fired warning shots. A number of police officers also were injured in the violence and officers arrested

dozens of people and expect to arrest more after studying video footage from security cameras, Aboutaleb said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/20/dutch-police-fire-warning-shots-as-covid-riots-rock-rotterdam>

### **Netherlands Police Fire Shots as Rioters Protest Covid Curbs**

Violent demonstrations broke out in Rotterdam over the Netherlands' virus restrictions, with the police firing warning shots and deploying a water canon to push back the crowd. The police said in a statement that two people were injured "related to the fired shots" but said details of the injuries were unclear. Tweets showed at least one car on fire with a bicycle tossed on top, amid the anger of hundreds of protesters, some reported to be soccer hooligans.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-19/netherlands-police-fire-shots-as-rioters-protest-covid-curbs>

### **Austria Braces for Protests After Announcing Full Lockdown and Vaccine Mandate**

Pockets of unrest are spreading across Europe as governments return to strict measures like lockdowns to reverse the latest coronavirus wave. New infections are at record levels and some countries, including Germany, the Czech Republic and Greece, are clamping down on the unvaccinated as health services are pushed to the limit. Austria has gone further, with a nationwide lockdown to start Monday. Violent demonstrations broke out in Rotterdam Friday night over the Netherlands' virus restrictions. Police fired warning shots and broke up the crowd with a water cannon. At least seven injuries were reported. The Dutch government has proposed excluding negative tests from the national health pass, allowing only vaccination or recovery from infection.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-19/austria-braces-for-protests-after-announcing-vaccine-mandate>

### **Biden vaccine rule faces roster of top conservative lawyers at 6th Circuit**

Veteran appellate lawyers who have pursued high-profile conservative cases are lining up at the 6th U.S. Circuit of Appeals to challenge the Biden administration's COVID-19 vaccination requirement. Among them is San Francisco-based lawyer Harmeet Dhillon, who is representing conservative media outlet The Daily Wire at the 6th Circuit and who represents the founder of Project Veritas in other matters. Dhillon has led a number of challenges to pandemic-related restrictions that California imposed to reduce the spread of the virus. She filed one of the first vaccine petitions at the appeals court contesting the vaccine rule requiring employers with 100 workers or more to mandate vaccination or implement a mask policy and weekly testing.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/biden-vaccine-rule-faces-roster-top-conservative-lawyers-6th-circuit-2021-11-19/>

### **Pro and anti-vaccination protesters take to Australia streets**

Several thousand people took to Australia's streets on Saturday protesting COVID-19 vaccination mandates, while smaller crowds gathered to support the measures that have elevated the country to be one of the most inoculated in the world. Nearly 85% of Australians aged 16 and above have been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus as of Nov. 19. While nationwide vaccinations are voluntary, states and territories have mandated vaccinations for many occupations and barred the unvaccinated from activities such as dining out and concerts.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/pro-anti-vaccination-protesters-take-australia-streets-2021-11-20/>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Pfizer to apply for EU authorization of its COVID pill on Friday**

Pfizer plans to apply for a European authorisation of its experimental antiviral pill to treat COVID-19 on Friday, German weekly Wirtschaftswoche said, citing sources close to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the company. The paper also said that acting German health minister Jens Spahn plans to buy Pfizer's medicine. "The health ministry is in contact with Pfizer regarding a possible procurement of the antiviral drug Paxlovid," Wirtschaftswoche quoted a ministry's spokesperson as

saying.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-apply-eu-authorization-its-covid-pill-friday-wirtschaftswoche-2021-11-19/>

### **China's BioKangtai begins first shipment of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 shot**

AstraZeneca Plc's (AZN.L) COVID-19 vaccine partner in China, Shenzhen Kangtai Biological Products (BioKangtai) (300601.SZ), has begun its first shipment of the shot, sending more than four million doses to Indonesia, BioKangtai said on Friday. Including the first batch, BioKangtai plans to send over eight million doses of the China-made AstraZeneca shot, branded as KconecaVac, to Indonesia this month, Zhang Qian, general manager at BioKangtai's international affairs department, said in a video interview with local media.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/chinas-biokangtai-begins-first-shipment-astrazenecas-covid-19-shot-2021-11-19/>

### **Market in China's Wuhan likely origin of COVID-19 outbreak - scientist**

The first known COVID-19 case was a market vendor in the Chinese city of Wuhan, not an accountant who appeared to have no link to the market but whose case contributed to speculation the virus could have leaked from a lab, a U.S. researcher wrote in a commentary piece published on Thursday. The origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 remains a mystery and a major source of tension between China and the United States. The new analysis by the researcher does not provide a definitive answer to that question.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/market-chinas-wuhan-likely-origin-covid-19-outbreak-study-2021-11-19/>

### **Canada authorizes Pfizer Covid vaccine for ages 5-11**

Canada on Friday became the latest country to authorize the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for children aged between five and 11-years-old. "After a thorough and independent scientific review of the evidence, the department has determined that the benefits of this vaccine for children between five and 11 years of age outweigh the risks," said an official statement from Health Canada. The decision follows an application by the companies submitted on October 18 after carrying out a clinical trial among thousands of children in this age group. The vaccine was found to be more than 90 percent effective at preventing Covid-19, and no serious side-effects were identified. It is dosed at 10 micrograms rather than the 30 micrograms used in older ages, and administered as two shots, three weeks apart.

<https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20211119-canada-authorizes-pfizer-covid-vaccine-for-ages-5-11>

### **Merck Covid pill backed for EU emergency use**

The EU's drug watchdog on Friday backed Merck's anti-Covid pill for emergency use ahead of its formal authorisation and started reviewing Pfizer's antiviral treatment as cases soar across Europe. The two pills by the US pharma giants represent a potentially groundbreaking step in the fight against coronavirus as studies show they cut the risk of hospitalisation and death in high-risk patients. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) said that while the Merck pill was not yet approved, it had "issued advice" so that individual countries in the 27-nation EU could decide whether to use it in case of a surge in infections. "The medicine, which is currently not authorised in the EU, can be used to treat adults with Covid-19 who do not require supplemental oxygen and who are at increased risk of developing severe Covid-19," the EMA said in a statement. "EMA issued this advice to support national authorities who may decide on possible early use of the medicine prior to marketing authorisation, for example in emergency use settings, in light of rising rates of infection and deaths due to Covid-19 across the EU."

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/business-and-tech/20211119-merck-covid-pill-backed-for-eu-emergency-use>

### **CDC expands COVID booster jab eligibility to all US adults**

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has expanded eligibility for COVID-19

booster jabs to all adults in the United States, move that paves the way for millions more Americans to receive additional protection against the virus. The CDC on Friday evening endorsed the advice of a health advisory panel, which earlier voted unanimously to recommend expanding booster eligibility to all Americans aged 18 and older who received their second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines at least six months earlier.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/19/us-fda-approves-pfizer-moderna-vaccine-boosters-for-all-adults>

### **Canada approves Pfizer-BioNTech jab for kids starting at age five**

The vaccine is 90.7 percent effective at preventing COVID-19 in kids with no serious side effects, Health Canada said. Canada has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine for children between the ages of five and 11. It's the first jab to be approved for kids in that age group, Health Canada said on Friday, calling the move "a major milestone" in the fight against COVID-19. The vaccine was 90.7 percent effective at preventing COVID-19 in children five to 11 years of age, Health Canada said, and no serious side effects were identified. "After a thorough and independent scientific review of the evidence, the Department has determined that the benefits of this vaccine for children between 5 and 11 years of age outweigh the risks," Health Canada said in a statement. Kids in Canada will receive two doses of the vaccine, at 10 micrograms each, to be taken three weeks apart. That is a lower dose than the 30 micrograms two-dose regimen authorised for people 12 years of age and older.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/19/canada-approves-pfizer-biontech-jab-for-kids-starting-at-age-five>

### **Could this gene double your risk of dying from COVID-19?**

Soon after the pandemic began, we knew that certain groups of people are more at risk of dying from COVID-19 than others. It was immediately clear that those with specific underlying health conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease were at increased risk, but slowly it became evident that certain ethnic groups were also being disproportionately affected. Social factors have played an important role in why these groups have been more affected than others, but genetics may also play a part. Scientists at Oxford University have now identified a version of a gene that may be associated with doubling the risk of respiratory failure from COVID, and it could go some way to explaining why people from particular backgrounds are more likely to die from the virus. The study's authors said that their work identifying the gene was extremely difficult because it wasn't merely the presence of the gene they were looking for, but whether it was switched "on", making it more high risk.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/11/17/could-this-gene-double-your-risk-of-dying-from-covid-19>

### **How will the COVID pandemic affect flu season?**

Countries in the Northern Hemisphere are facing an unpredictable winter as COVID-19 continues to spread during the flu season, experts have warned. Last year, when governments recommended a range of protective measures such as mask-wearing, social distancing and lockdowns to slow COVID-19 infections, the number of influenza cases dropped dramatically compared with the seasonal average. According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) about 20 percent of the population catches the flu each year, but that figure fell by more than 99 percent in 2020-21. There were no hospitalised cases nor fatalities reported from influenza last season. Cases this year have remained low, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), but with COVID restrictions being lifted in many parts of the world, children back in school, and the coronavirus continuing to spread, experts are urging people to remain cautious. An uptick of influenza cases could burden health systems already facing difficulties due to outbreaks of COVID-19

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/19/how-will-the-covid-pandemic-affect-flu-season>

### **FDA official explains decision on 'simplified' booster shots**

The U.S. government's booster campaign got a lot simpler Friday after Food and Drug Administration

officials authorized extra shots of Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for all adults. It replaces a complicated system in which eligibility was based on age, health conditions and other factors. "It's simplified things, I think significantly over the situation that we had in place previously," FDA's vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks told The Associated Press. The FDA action comes after months of debate among experts over whether everyone 18 and older should get an extra shot for protection.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-science-health-db91e37a256d7db0b8fca0b5c78a71cf>

### **Research links COVID-19 in pregnancy with stillbirths**

Pregnant women with COVID-19 face increased chances for stillbirths compared with uninfected women, and that risk spiked to four times higher after the delta variant emerged, new government data show. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a report Friday that examined 1.2 million deliveries in 736 hospitals nationwide from March 2020 through September 2021. Stillbirths were rare overall, totaling 8,154 among all deliveries. But the researchers found that for women with COVID-19, about 1 in 80 deliveries resulted in stillbirth. Among the uninfected, it was 1 in 155. Among those with COVID-19, stillbirths were more common in people with chronic high blood pressure and other complications, including those in intensive care or on breathing machines.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-science-lifestyle-health-centers-for-disease-control-and-prevention-09d66b3b147016b45bae8e405062d7d8>

### **US opens COVID boosters to all adults, urges them for 50+**

The U.S. on Friday opened COVID-19 booster shots to all adults and took the extra step of urging people 50 and older to seek one, aiming to ward off a winter surge as coronavirus cases rise even before millions of Americans travel for the holidays. Until now, Americans faced a confusing list of who was eligible for a booster that varied by age, their health and which kind of vaccine they got first. The Food and Drug Administration authorized changes to Pfizer and Moderna boosters to make it easier. Under the new rules, anyone 18 or older can choose either a Pfizer or Moderna booster six months after their last dose. For anyone who got the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the wait already was just two months. And people can mix-and-match boosters from any company.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-boosters-adults-cdc-fda-pfizer-moderna-34aabde2c1c5a88c7763fa1dac77df5f>

### **Fauci overwhelmed by calls after journal published mistake over beagle experiments | TheHill**

The nation's top infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci has been inundated with calls following a mistake in a scientific journal claiming that the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) was funding experimental research on beagles. The calls were so frequent that Fauci's assistant stopped answering the phone for two weeks in October, The Washington Post reported Friday. He received 3,600 phone calls in 36 hours. "The constant harassment in the form of ridiculous accusations and outright lies makes doing my job and that of my staff of fighting the covid-19 pandemic all the more difficult," Fauci told the Post. "This attack on me, which clearly has political overtones to a nonpolitical scientist, I feel, is dangerous to the entire field of science and [shows] how people try to intimidate scientists."

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/582377-fauci-overwhelmed-by-calls-after-misinformation-campaign-over-beagle>

### **Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna Covid-19 Boosters for All Adults Backed by FDA, CDC**

Booster shots from Pfizer Inc and partner BioNTech and Moderna Inc. mRNA will be available to all adults after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention endorsed the extra doses for people at least six months after their second shot. The signoff Friday by CDC Director Rochelle Walensky will lead to a significant widening of the U.S. booster campaign that health officials hope will remove confusion and offer people more protection ahead of holiday gatherings and travel as new daily Covid-19 cases are beginning to rise again. "Booster shots have demonstrated the ability to safely

increase people's protection against infection and severe outcomes and are an important public health tool to strengthen our defenses against the virus as we enter the winter holidays," Dr. Walensky said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-boosters-from-pfizer-biontech-moderna-cleared-for-all-u-s-adults-11637329341>

### **Merck's Covid Pill Can Be Used to Treat Adults, EU Regulator Says**

Merck & Co.'s antiviral pill for Covid-19 can be used to treat adults in the European Union, the bloc's drug regulator said, giving countries another weapon to use as a fourth wave of the pandemic sweeps the continent. Merck's Lagevrio pill, known generically as molnupiravir, is still under review and hasn't been formally authorized for sale. But until then, it can be used to treat adults who don't need oxygen therapy and face an increased risk of developing severe Covid, the European Medicines Agency's human medicines committee said on Friday. National authorities may decide to use the pill in emergency settings "in light of rising rates of infection and deaths due to Covid-19 across the EU," the regulator said. Austria imposed a nationwide lockdown on Friday, and German authorities said they wouldn't rule out a similar move, as cases rise and intensive care facilities fill up.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-19/merck-covid-pill-can-be-used-to-treat-adults-eu-regulator-says>

### **Delta variant dangerous during pregnancy, CDC reports say**

Once the delta variant took hold in the United States, pregnant individuals and their fetuses or babies faced increased risks from coronavirus infections, according to two new reports released Friday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One report found that 15 pregnant patients died of covid-related causes between March 2020 and early October, including nine who died after delta became the most prominent strain. All but one of the women who died had underlying health conditions, and none had been fully vaccinated. The second report found that the risk of stillbirth increased about fourfold for women with covid-19 as delta surged. The reports' authors emphasize the importance of preventive measures including vaccination, which the CDC recommends for pregnant people. Only about 30 percent of pregnant Americans are vaccinated, a rate far lower than the population as a whole.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2021/11/19/covid-delta-variant-live-updates/>

### **Hong Kong Approves Sinovac Vaccine for Children Ages 3-17**

Hong Kong approved lowering the age of eligibility for the Covid-19 vaccine from China's Sinovac Biotech Ltd. to three years old, down from 18 years old. The city's Secretary for Food and Health said adolescents from 12-to-17 years will be accorded priority to receive the vaccine, "with a view to extending to children of a younger age group at a later stage," according to a statement on Saturday. Experts serving on panels for the Centre for Health Protection had earlier backed the new age limit. The expansion of the eligible population comes as Hong Kong's immunization campaign hits a wall. Vaccine hesitancy is ripe especially among the elderly population, many of whom refuse to even get one dose. Since the effort began in February, about 60% of residents have been fully vaccinated, according to Bloomberg's Vaccine Tracker.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-20/hong-kong-approves-sinovac-vaccine-for-children-ages-3-17>

### **EU recommends Merck COVID-19 pill for adults at risk of severe illness**

The European Union's drug regulator on Friday advised that an experimental COVID-19 pill from Merck should be given within five days of first symptoms to treat adults who do not need oxygen support and are at risk of their disease worsening. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) said the pill, developed along with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics, should be taken twice a day for five days, but advised against use during pregnancy for in women who plan to get pregnant.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/eu-recommends-merck-covid-19-pill-adults-risk-severe-illness-2021-11-19/>

### **U.S. expands COVID-19 booster eligibility to all adults**

U.S. regulators expanded eligibility for booster shots of COVID-19 vaccines to all adults on Friday, allowing millions more Americans to get additional protection against the virus amid a recent rise in infections. The director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Rochelle Walensky, signed off on the expanded eligibility on Friday evening after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration broadened its authorization of booster doses to all adults who had received their second shot of either the Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna Inc vaccine at least six months prior.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/covid-19-boosters-for-all-discussion-moves-cdc-2021-11-19/>

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<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-20/hong-kong-approves-sinovac-vaccine-for-children-ages-3-17?srnd=premium-europe>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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

Russia on Friday reported 1,254 coronavirus-related deaths in the last 24 hours, a record daily high that follows a surge in cases. The government coronavirus task force also reported 37,156 nationwide infections, including 3,371 in Moscow, down from a peak of 41,335 recorded on Nov. 6.

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

### **Czechs report highest daily coronavirus cases since pandemic start**

The Czech Republic reported 22,936 new coronavirus cases for Friday, its biggest daily tally since the pandemic began, health ministry data showed on Saturday. Earlier in the week the country tightened restrictions on people who have not had COVID-19 shots to encourage more vaccinations and to ease the burden on hospitals. The Czech government has approved plans to allow only those who are vaccinated or have recovered from COVID-19 in the past six months to enter restaurants, attend certain events and use some other services from Monday

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/czechs-report-highest-daily-coronavirus-cases-since-pandemic-start-2021-11-20/>

### **England's COVID prevalence drops for second week, ONS says**

The prevalence of COVID-19 infections in England fell back to about 1 in 65 people in the week ending Nov. 13, Britain's Office for National Statistics said on Friday, dropping for a second week after hitting its highest level of the year. Prevalence had been 1 in 60 people in previous week. Recorded cases and estimated prevalence of infection have both dropped back from peaks hit before a school half-term holiday at the end of last month.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/englands-covid-prevalence-drops-second-week-ons-says-2021-11-19/>

### **Macron says France does not need to lock down 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/>

### **Disease control chief: "All of Germany is one big outbreak"**

Germany has entered a "nationwide state of emergency" because of surging coronavirus infections, the head of the country's disease control agency said Friday. Lothar Wieler, the head of the Robert Koch Institute, said regular medical care cannot be guaranteed anymore in some parts of the country because hospitals and intensive care wards are overstretched. The German air force confirmed a report by daily Bild that it was preparing to help transfer patients to clinics with free beds. "All of Germany is one big outbreak," Wieler told reporters in Berlin. "This is a nationwide state of emergency. We need to pull the emergency brake." He called for urgent additional measures to tackle the rise in COVID-19 cases, which topped 50,000 for the third day running. The Robert Koch Institute also reported 201 further deaths, taking the toll to 98,739 since the start of the outbreak.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-europe-germany-berlin-cd31b33f8acb3bbb1cb11bfd495348f7>

### **Facing surge, Austria will mandate COVID-19 shots, lock down**

Austria announced a national lockdown and a plan to mandate vaccinations as coronavirus infections hit a record high Friday, forcing the government to walk back promises that strict shutdowns were a thing of the past. While the scope of the proposed mandate was unclear, a blanket requirement would be a first for a Western country. Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg said those who didn't comply would likely be fined but gave no other details. The moves come as vaccinations in Austria have plateaued at one of the lowest rates in Western Europe, and as hospitals in heavily hit states have warned that their intensive care units are reaching capacity. Average daily deaths have tripled in recent weeks — though the number of fatalities reported over the past week remains well below the high of last winter and 13 U.S. states are already seeing more deaths per 100,000 people. Earlier this month, Schallenberg indicated a full lockdown would not be needed and instead imposed the restrictions only on those not vaccinated.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-lifestyle-health-europe-restaurants-9627ef468fa8484796d33e8dc656e989>

### **Facing new COVID wave, Dutch delay care for cancer, heart patients**

Dutch healthcare officials said on Friday they have begun delaying operations for some cancer and heart patients to free up space in intensive care units during a record wave of COVID-19 infections. "These are cancer patients that should actually be operated on within six weeks of diagnosis, and that won't be met in all cases. It's also heart patients," said a spokesperson for LCPS, the national organisation that allocates hospital resources. "It's horrible, of course, for the patients." The National Institute for Health (RIVM) reported a record of more than 23,000 new cases in the previous 24 hours on Thursday, compared with the previous daily high of around 13,000 reached in December 2020.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/facing-new-covid-wave-dutch-delay-care-for-cancer-heart-patients/ar-AAQTYk0>