

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

24th Nov 2021

Lockdown Exit

Covid jab wait for 12- to 15-year-olds in England could be up to five months

Delays to the vaccination rollout mean some 12- to 15-year-olds may not get their Covid jab until February next year – 15 weeks after the government's original target for offering the jab to all eligible teenagers, according to Labour. Officials originally set October half-term as the target to invite those in the age group to receive the vaccine in schools after criticism that England was slow to approve it for children compared to other countries. New analysis by Labour suggests however that if the vaccination of the 2.8m eligible 12- to 15-year-olds continues at the current rate, it could take until 7 February for some teenagers to be jabbed – a five-month wait for some.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/23/covid-jab-wait-for-12--to-15-year-olds-in-england-could-be-up-to-five-months>

Germans Line Up at Vaccine Centers as Booster Push Accelerates

Germany's sluggish Covid vaccine campaign is rattling back to life, with many snapping up online appointments for shots and others enduring hours of lines in the cold to receive more protection against the coronavirus. Some are taking to Twitter to voice frustration, elation or both at the surge in demand for Covid shots. Comments thanked those hardy enough to brave the elements for a shot, while others criticized authorities for not better organizing the latest inoculation push.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-23/germans-line-up-at-vaccine-centers-as-booster-push-accelerates>

COVID-19: Take a lateral flow test before you visit busy places this Christmas, says government

The government is advising people to take a COVID-19 test before they spend time in "crowded and enclosed spaces" this winter. The Cabinet Office had previously advised people to take two lateral flow tests a week, especially if they have school-age children or are meeting clinically vulnerable people. Now the public is being told to take rapid lateral flow tests "if it is expected that there will be a period of high risk that day". It does not state what a high-risk scenario may be, but it could be an activity such as Christmas shopping in busy high streets or shopping centres. The Cabinet Office website says: "You are at higher risk of catching or passing on COVID-19 in crowded and enclosed spaces, where there are more people who might be infectious and where there is limited fresh air

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-take-a-lateral-flow-test-before-you-visit-busy-places-this-christmas-says-government-12476176>

Covid Curbs, Vaccine Mandates Spark Unrest in French Caribbean

Week-long protests on the French-Caribbean island of Guadeloupe spilled over into nearby Martinique this week, as residents rebel against Covid-19 restrictions and vaccine mandates for healthcare workers. The unrest comes as the two French jurisdictions have seen their tourism-based economies throttled by the pandemic and where distrust of politicians in Paris runs high, as does the unemployment rate. French Prime Minister Jean Castex held a video conference with Guadeloupe officials late Monday to discuss ways to end the crisis, his office said in an e-mailed statement. That meeting was supposed to happen in person but was held online after Castex tested positive for Covid-19.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-23/unrest-roils-french-caribbean-over-covid-curbs-vaccine-mandates>

[tes](#)

U.S. Has Lost More Lives to Covid This Year Than Last

This was supposed to be the year vaccines brought the pandemic under control. Instead, more people in the United States have died from Covid-19 this year than died last year, before vaccines were available. As of Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had recorded 386,233 deaths involving Covid-19 in 2021, compared with 385,343 in 2020. The final number for this year will be higher, not only because there is more than a month left but because it takes time for local agencies to report deaths to the C.D.C. Covid-19 has also accounted for a higher percentage of U.S. deaths this year than it did last year: about 13 percent compared with 11 percent.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/23/world/united-states-death-toll-covid.html>

As Virus Cases Rise in Europe, an Economic Toll Returns

Europe's already fragile economic recovery is at risk of being undermined by a fourth wave of coronavirus infections now dousing the continent, as governments impose increasingly stringent health restrictions that could reduce foot traffic in shopping centers, discourage travel and thin crowds in restaurants, bars and ski resorts. Austria has imposed the strictest measures, mandating vaccinations and imposing a nationwide lockdown that began on Monday. But economic activity will also be dampened by other safety measures — from vaccine passports in France and Switzerland to a requirement to work from home four days a week in Belgium.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/23/business/economy/europe-covid-economy.html>

Exit Strategies

Israel begins giving COVID shots to children age 5 to 11

Israel on Tuesday began administering the coronavirus vaccine to children age 5 to 11. The country recently emerged from a fourth COVID wave, and daily infections have been relatively low for the last few weeks. But Health Ministry statistics show that a large share of the new infections have been in children and teenagers.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/naftali-bennett-covid-tel-aviv-children-b1962609.html>

German soldiers face vaccine mandate as COVID cases rise

The German military is poised to make coronavirus vaccines mandatory for troops as COVID-19 infections continue to rise across the country. The Defense Ministry on Tuesday confirmed a report in the German military blog Augen Geradeaus that officials and soldiers' representatives agreed late Monday to add the coronavirus shot to the list of vaccines soldiers must get. The measure still needs to be formally added to military regulations, the ministry said in a statement. There were 1,215 active COVID-19 cases as of Monday reported within the military and the ministry's civilian staff. The nationwide tally of newly confirmed cases rose by 45,326 in the past 24 hours, the country's disease control agency said Tuesday. A further 309 deaths from COVID-19 were reported, taking the total toll since the start of the outbreak to 99,433. On Monday, the U.S. State Department urged Americans not to travel to Germany because of rising case numbers, and to ensure they are fully vaccinated if they do.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/covid-berlin-americans-jens-spahn-b1962699.html>

UK employers step up demand for workers vaccinated against Covid

Employers in the UK are following the lead of their counterparts in the US by stepping up demands for staff to be vaccinated against Covid-19, analysis of recruitment adverts reveals. According to figures from the jobs website Adzuna, the number of ads explicitly requiring candidates to be vaccinated rose by 189% between August and October as more firms ask for workers to be jabbed before they start on the job. Out of a total 1.2m job vacancies in the UK on its platform, the number of adverts requiring vaccination increased from 805 in August to 2,161 in September and 2,324 in

October.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/23/uk-employers-step-up-demand-for-workers-vaccinated-against-covid>

White House says U.S. will not lock down to fight Covid as European nations implement restrictions

"We can curb the spread of the virus without having to in any way shut down our economy," White House coronavirus response coordinator Jeff Zients said. "We have 82% of people now with one shot and more and more people getting vaccinated each week," Zients said. Austria's lockdown began Monday and will last for at most 20 days, with a nationwide vaccine mandate taking effect Feb. 1. The Netherlands' launched a partial lockdown on Saturday as well.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/11/22/white-house-says-no-covid-lockdowns-as-european-nations-implement-restrictions.html>

Getting jabs to the unvaccinated has never been more critical

More than ever before, we must look behind the reported Covid-19 numbers in hospitals and communities to understand what is happening in the pandemic. We also need to better understand how the pandemic is playing out among unvaccinated people, and those who have been vaccinated. To the public, the pandemic was and still is a silent pestilence, made visible by the images of patients fighting for their next breath and reporters at intensive care units talking about the fear of patients and the exhaustion of doctors and nurses from behind their fogged visors. This ongoing horror, which is taking place in ICUs across Britain, is now largely restricted to unvaccinated people. Generally, Covid-19 is no longer a disease of the vaccinated; vaccines tend to limit this suffocating affliction, with a few exceptions.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/nov/23/unvaccinated-people-boosters-covid-jab>

Italy allows COVID-19 vaccine booster 5 months after completing the first cycle -minister

Health Minister Roberto Speranza on Monday said it will be possible for the Italians to receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster five months after completing the first vaccination cycle. "The booster dose is crucial to better protect ourselves and those around us. After Aifa's (Italy's medicines authority) latest advice, it will be possible to take it five months after completing the first cycle," Speranza wrote on Facebook.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/italy-allows-covid-19-vaccine-boosters-5-months-after-completing-first-cycle-2021-11-22/>

Global licence deal to provide COVID antibody test tech free to poorer countries - WHO

A global licence for serological technology that detects COVID-19 antibodies will be provided royalty-free to poor and middle-income countries under a first of its kind agreement to boost production, the World Health Organisation said on Tuesday. The existing four tests, which check for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 antibodies developed after either an infection or a vaccine dose, could also inform decisions on the need for boosters to protect against the disease, it said in a statement. The non-exclusive licensing agreement reached with the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), a public research institute offering the technology as a global public good, is the first test licence signed by the WHO's Medicines Patent Pool (MPP).

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/global-licence-deal-provide-covid-antibody-test-tech-free-poorer-countries-who-2021-11-23/>

Resumption of India's COVAX vaccine supply delayed by Nepal - sources

The resumption of India supplying COVID-19 vaccines to the global COVAX vaccine-sharing platform after eight months was delayed on Monday when Nepal requested a postponement, two sources told Reuters. The Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's biggest vaccine maker, was scheduled to ship Covishield doses through COVAX to Nepal on Monday, but the country now wants them only around

Nov. 29, said one of the sources, a Nepal health ministry official. He declined to explain the reasons for the delay. Neither source wanted to be named ahead of vaccine delivery, expected to be in hundreds of thousands of doses.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/resumption-indias-covax-vaccine-supply-delayed-by-nepal-sources-2021-11-22/>

EU Weighs Changes to Covid Certificates, Travel Rules During Surge

The European Union is discussing this week how to update its digital Covid-19 certificates and its approach to travel within and outside the bloc as member nations take varying steps to counter the latest wave of the pandemic.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/eu-weighs-changes-to-covid-certificates-travel-rules-during-surge/ar-AAR08PH>

With Vaccine Mandate Looming, Business Owners Face Wary Workers

Small-business owners are confronting challenges preparing for the Biden administration's vaccine mandate, with some saying efforts to comply are exacerbating hiring problems and stoking tensions with and among workers. Under new federal rules, employers with 100 or more workers must ensure employees get fully vaccinated or else test negative for Covid-19 at least weekly and wear a mask at work. A federal appeals court temporarily blocked implementation of the rules in response to legal challenges, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration agreed not to begin enforcement pending a court decision. Many business owners are nonetheless preparing for the mandate, slated to take full effect Jan. 4. Pete Yohe, president of Bloomsburg, Pa., manufacturer Dyco Inc., said he applauds the spirit of the new rules because they encourage vaccinations. "But I hate the 100-plus mandate, which forces some of our employees to quit and go to smaller companies," he said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/with-vaccine-mandate-looming-business-owners-face-wary-workers-11637404200>

Feds tout COVID-19 vaccine mandate, booster doses

Though vaccine mandates remain a hot-button issue, they are helping boost coverage federal officials say, with the Biden administration announcing today that 95% of the federal workforce complied by today's deadline. The announcement at a briefing today comes amid a steady rise in US COVID-19 activity and a strong push for booster doses, just days before Thanksgiving. Meanwhile, in Europe—well into a fifth surge—unrest flared in a handful of countries as some groups pushed back against stronger government measures to slow the surges that are poised to overrun health systems.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/11/feds-tout-covid-19-vaccine-mandate-booster-doses>

Partisan Exits

COVID-19 rules fueled 'explosive' unrest in Guadeloupe: Macron

Anger about a vaccine mandate in the French overseas territory of Guadeloupe has created an "explosive" situation, President Emmanuel Macron has said. A general strike called by trade unions has entered its second week following nights of looting and violent protests against coronavirus measures imposed by Paris, including health pass rules and mandatory vaccinations for health workers. Macron's prime minister and lawmakers from the Caribbean archipelago will hold crisis talks in Paris on Monday. Home to roughly 400,000 residents, police in Guadeloupe arrested 38 people overnight on Sunday after curfew violators looted and torched shops and pharmacies. "We just don't know how far this will still go," the mayor of Point-a-Pitre, Guadeloupe's main city, told France Info radio.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/22/covid-19-rules-fueled-explosive-unrest-in-guadeloupe-macron>

Scientific Viewpoint

Mexico eyes COVID-19 vaccine booster shots, especially for older adults

Mexico will analyze administering booster vaccine doses against COVID-19, especially for older people, President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said on Tuesday, softening his previous stance on the need for a third shot. Less than two months ago, Lopez Obrador had rejected suggestions that Mexico should administer a third vaccine shot, saying experts deemed it to be unnecessary. But his government has gradually opened the door to giving more people shots, including teenagers.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexico-eyes-covid-19-vaccine-booster-shots-especially-older-adults-2021-11-23/>

Covaxin Gave Lower Protection Amid India's Deadly Delta-Led Wave

Covaxin, one of the main vaccines used in India's coronavirus immunization drive, provides only 50% protection against symptomatic Covid-19, according to a real-world study that suggests the shot is less effective than initially thought. As India was slammed by its second-major Covid wave earlier this year, researchers at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi analyzed data from 2,714 of the hospital's health workers who were showing signs of infection and underwent RT-PCR testing between April 15 and May 15, according to a study published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal. At the start of the country's vaccination campaign in January, staff at AIIMS had exclusively been offered Covaxin, a shot co-developed by India's state-funded health research agency and Bharat Biotech International Ltd.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-23/covaxin-gave-lower-protection-amid-india-s-deadly-delta-led-wave>

Biden Covid Vaccine Booster Plan May Face Resistance From CDC Panel, FDA

Medical experts who advise U.S. regulators on vaccines are chafing at what they perceive as political interference in the review process by the Biden administration. Last month, the White House announced plans to begin distributing Covid-19 booster shots to Americans Sept. 20. However, the effort still needs the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to sign off. Members of a key panel that advises the CDC on vaccines have pushed back consideration of the plan to mid-September and said this week they were concerned that politics was getting ahead of the process. It's "very frightening to me that health-care providers are trying to do the best job that they can, and are taking guidance from HHS and the White House," said Helen Talbot, a Vanderbilt University professor of medicine and member of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, in a meeting Monday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-09-02/biden-s-booster-plan-seen-facing-resistance-from-cdc-panel-fda>

The real risk of heart inflammation to kids is from COVID-19—not the vaccine

Elizabeth Brown, a mother of two who lives outside Denver, Colorado, had a tough decision to make when childhood COVID-19 vaccines became available. Her five-year-old was born with a congenital heart defect that required a risky surgery when he was two years old to avoid a lifelong risk of heart inflammation from infection. But Brown also knew that after getting some COVID-19 vaccines, adolescent boys are at risk of developing myocarditis, a different kind of inflammation of the heart. "To read about children with no cardiac history having myocarditis as a pediatric vaccine complication was scary," Brown says. "There were a lot of inflammatory headlines from the media that preyed on a parent's fear in terms of the vaccination and very little information readily available regarding the damage COVID can do."

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/the-real-risk-of-heart-inflammation-to-kids-is-from-covid-19-not-the-vaccine>

AstraZeneca chief: Our coronavirus vaccine could protect older people longer than mRNA jabs

The head of AstraZeneca has suggested that the company's adenovirus vaccine could provide

longer-lasting protection against COVID-19 especially in older people than the mRNA vaccines from BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna. French CEO Pascal Soriot said this could be a reason why the U.K. hasn't experienced the same high levels of hospitalizations as Europe, where cases have surged in recent months. But he said more data was needed. "It's really interesting, when you look at the U.K., there was a big peak of infections, but not so many hospitalizations relative to Europe," he told BBC Radio 4. "In the U.K., this vaccine was used to vaccinate older people whereas in Europe initially people thought the vaccine doesn't work in older people," he said. The pharma chief suggested that this could be because AstraZeneca's adenovirus vaccine provides a better T cell response than mRNA vaccines. "The antibody response is what drives the immediate reaction or defense of the body when you are attacked by the virus," Soriot said. "And the T cell response takes a little longer to come in. But it's actually more durable; it lasts longer." The pharma chief said AstraZeneca's adenovirus COVID-19 vaccine "has been shown to stimulate T cells to a higher degree in older people."

<https://www.politico.eu/article/astrazeneca-coronavirus-vaccine-protect-older-people-longer-than-mrna/>

The FDA will soon decide on Merck's Covid-19 antiviral pill. It shows promise, but there are also concerns

In the fall of 2015, Dr. Mark Denison was preparing for a long drive home from Alabama after making a presentation at a scientific meeting when a colleague asked him to stick around for lunch and check out some data on a potential new drug. Denison said yes, and six years later, he's very glad he stayed. Denison's colleague, George Painter, is a "drug hunter" at Emory University in Atlanta. At lunch, he showed Denison lab results he'd obtained with a new antiviral compound, now known as molnupiravir. "It just knocked my socks off," said Denison, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. "With increasing concentrations of the drug, the virus's ability to grow just plummeted." Painter's lab looked at the effect molnupiravir had against the influenza virus and chikungunya, a virus that's spread by mosquitos. After the Alabama meeting, Painter sent some of the compound to Denison, who tried it in his lab against the virus that causes Middle East Respiratory Syndrome.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/23/health/merck-covid-pill-molnupiravir/index.html>

Pfizer says its Covid vaccine is STILL 100% effective in children ages 12 to 15 four months after the second dose

Pfizer-BioNTech released data on Monday from a long-term analysis of their COVID-19 vaccine in kids aged 12 to 15. There were 30 confirmed symptomatic Covid cases in the placebo group compared to none in the vaccinated group. Researchers say this equates to 100% efficacy at least four months after receiving the second dose. The vaccine is currently only fully approved for those aged 16 and older but the companies plan to apply for extended approval in the 12-15 age group soon.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-10230455/Pfizer-says-Covid-shot-100-effective-adolescents-4-months.html>

Vaccines Ward Off Severe Covid in U.S., Wane Against Infections

Covid-19 vaccines remain highly effective at keeping people alive and out of the hospital, but new U.S. data add further support to the argument that the shots aren't preventing infections as much as they once did. Unvaccinated people were about five times more likely to test positive for the virus than the vaccinated in the week starting Sept. 26, down from about 15 times more likely in May, according to the latest age-adjusted data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which were updated Monday. The new figures come shortly after the CDC approved booster shots for all adults, and could provide additional support for third doses as the U.S. heads into its traditional winter virus season. Covid-19 cases are rising across many parts of the U.S., including the Midwest and Northeast. The CDC data isn't adjusted for time since vaccination. That means that the earliest recipients of the vaccine -- mostly senior citizens and those with pre-existing conditions --

are possibly at even greater risk.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-22/vaccines-ward-off-severe-covid-in-u-s-wane-against-infections>

Covid antivirals could be pandemic game-changers. But Americans might struggle to access them

Antiviral drugs for treating Covid-19 have been hailed as a pandemic “game-changer” — a tool that could, perhaps, finally help life return to normal. But basic gaps in the U.S. health system could mean that two new treatments from Pfizer and Merck won’t make much of a difference after all. The companies’ treatments, which haven’t yet received emergency authorization, could make a Covid diagnosis dramatically less threatening. But in practice, before receiving the pills, patients may need to jump through a series of hoops that often prevent Americans from accessing care: Recognizing their symptoms, taking a test, getting a prescription from a clinician, and filling the prescription at a pharmacy. “Our routine medical systems are not really set up for this,” said Céline Gounder, a physician and NYU professor who served on President Biden’s Covid advisory board in the months before his inauguration. “These are medications that need to be started within three days of developing symptoms. It can take you longer than three days to get an appointment.”

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/11/23/covid-antivirals-pandemic-game-changers-americans-struggle-access/>

COVID-19 tied to higher risk of stillbirth, maternal death

In the first study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Response Team analyzed data from the Premier Healthcare Database Special COVID-19 Release, a large, hospital-based database from March 2020 to September 2021, a period that included the emergence and eventual dominance of Delta. Of all pregnant women in the database, 53.7% were White, 50.6% had private health insurance, 15.4% were obese, 11.2% had diabetes, 17.2% had high blood pressure, 1.8% had multiple-gestation pregnancy, 4.9% smoked, and 1.73% had COVID-19. The study authors noted that most of the women who tested positive for COVID-19 at delivery were likely unvaccinated. Among 1,249,634 deliveries at 736 hospitals, stillbirths were rare, at 0.65%, but the rate was 1.26% among 21,653 deliveries to pregnant COVID-19 patients, compared with 0.64% among 1,227,981 deliveries to non-COVID-19 patients. Stillbirths were defined as fetal deaths at 20 weeks’ gestation or later.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/11/covid-19-tied-higher-risk-stillbirth-maternal-death>

Pfizer, BioNTech ace long-term test of their COVID vaccine in kids 12 to 15, setting up likely approval

Six months ago, Pfizer and BioNTech secured emergency use authorization for their COVID-19 vaccine in 12- to 15-year-olds. Now, the companies have provided long-term data that could bring a full approval in the age group. In a follow-up study of 2,228 children, the vaccine was 100% effective in preventing infection seven days to four months after the second dose. There were no serious safety concerns observed in those with at least six months of follow-up. With the results, the companies will file for full FDA approval in the age group. In August, the shot won an FDA nod in people 16 and older.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/pfizer-biontech-ace-long-term-test-covid-19-shot-kids-12-15-setting-up-full-approval>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid patients in ICU now almost all unvaccinated, says Oxford scientist

Covid-19 is no longer a disease of the vaccinated, the head of the Oxford jab programme has said. The “ongoing horror” of patients gasping for breath in hospital is now “largely restricted” to people who are unvaccinated, according to Prof Sir Andrew Pollard. Even though the more transmissible Delta variant continues to infect thousands, most of those who are fully vaccinated will experience only “mild infections” that are “little more than an unpleasant inconvenience”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/23/covid-patients-in-icu-now-almost-all-unvaccinated-says-oxford-scientist>

French prime minister positive for COVID-19, as cases rise

France's prime minister tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday, hours after returning from a visit to neighboring Belgium and just as France is seeing a nationwide resurgence of infections, according to his office. French Prime Minister Jean Castex will adapt his schedule for the coming 10 days to continue his activities in isolation, his office said. Officials at the prime minister's headquarters did not comment on whether Castex has any virus symptoms. One of Castex's daughters tested positive Monday after her father returned from a meeting with Belgian Prime Minister Alexander de Croo in Brussels and Castex himself then took two tests that were both positive, his office said.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/french-paris-belgium-emmanuel-macron-one-b1962493.html>

Covid-19 cases in children are up 32% from two weeks ago, pediatricians' group says

Covid-19 cases in children are up 32% from two weeks ago, according to new numbers published Monday by the American Academy of Pediatrics. For the week ending November 18, there were at least 141,905 new cases among children, with children making up a disproportionate share of the cases, representing more than a quarter of all new Covid-19 cases for the past week. Children account for 22% of the US population. When the virus first became a known problem in the US in early 2020, kids accounted for fewer than 3% of confirmed cases. Since the start of the pandemic, more than 6.8 million children have tested positive for Covid-19

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/22/health/covid-19-children-cases-up-again/index.html>

Covid-19 cases are on the rise with Thanksgiving just days away

Thanksgiving this year will be much different than last year, but far from risk-free, as Covid-19 cases continue to rise across the country and millions of Americans remain unvaccinated. The daily case rate in the United States is about half of what it was at this time last year, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. But the current pace -- about 92,000 new Covid-19 cases each day -- is up 16% from just a week ago. Cases dropped off quickly at the tail end of the summer surge, but have started to climb again over the past couple weeks and are now back to levels last seen in August. Nearly a third of new cases are in Midwestern states, with Michigan and Minnesota reporting more cases per capita than any other states. But the trend is nationwide; all but a dozen states saw cases rise over the past week, JHU data shows

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/22/health/thanksgiving-covid-cases/index.html>

Europe likely to see more than two million Covid-19 deaths by March, WHO warns

Europe is likely to experience more than two million Covid-19 deaths by March, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned. The WHO said the European region remains "in the firm grip" of the coronavirus pandemic, with reported daily deaths rising to almost 4,200 a day - double the 2,100 deaths a day at the end of September. The warning comes as a string of European nations impose renewed restrictions amid surging Covid-19 rates across the continent. Austria entered its fourth national lockdown on Monday and is introducing mandatory vaccinations from February due to low uptake. Case numbers in Germany are soaring with only 7.5 per cent of the population having received a booster shot and a possible lockdown looming.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/who-europe-health-asia-delta-b967765.html>

France's average daily new COVID infections near three-month high

French health authorities reported 5,266 daily new COVID-19 infections on Monday, pushing the seven-day moving average of new cases to an almost three-month high. That average - which smoothes out daily reporting irregularities - rose to 18,479, a level unseen since Aug. 27, from a three-month low of 4,172 on Oct. 10. It had set a 2021 record of 42,225 in mid-April before falling to a 2021 low of 1,816 at the end of June. French government spokesperson Gabriel Attal said on

Sunday the current wave of the pandemic was "rampant."

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/frances-intensive-care-figure-covid-19-seven-week-peak-2021-11-22/>

Germany considers more COVID-19 curbs, compulsory vaccines as cases soar

Germany should impose further restrictions to try to stop a fourth wave of coronavirus infections, outgoing Health Minister Jens Spahn said on Tuesday as more politicians backed the idea of compulsory vaccinations. The surge in infections comes at a difficult time as Chancellor Angela Merkel is preparing to hand over to a new government after a national election in September. The leaders of the Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and Free Democrats, who are trying to form a new coalition, were due to break off their talks on Tuesday to meet Merkel to discuss the pandemic, sources close to the negotiations told Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-considers-more-covid-19-curbs-us-advises-against-travel-there-2021-11-23/>

Dutch COVID-19 patients transferred to Germany as hospitals struggle

The Netherlands started transporting COVID-19 patients across the border to Germany on Tuesday to ease pressure on Dutch hospitals, which are scaling back regular care to deal with a surge in coronavirus cases. A patient was transferred by ambulance from Rotterdam to a hospital in Bochum, some 240 km (150 miles) east, on Tuesday morning, and another would follow later in the day, health authorities said. The number of COVID-19 patients in Dutch hospitals has swelled to its highest level since May in recent weeks and is expected to increase further as infections jump to record levels.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/dutch-covid-19-patients-transferred-germany-hospitals-struggle-2021-11-23/>

China Is More Dedicated Than Ever to Covid Zero as It Battles Delta

China is facing its toughest virus battle since the first days of the pandemic. Rather than pivot from the strict Covid Zero route that others have abandoned, the country is doubling down, despite rising costs to its people and economy. The current resurgence already accounts for the most infections and the most days with new cases spurred by the delta variant since May. It's also the most widespread outbreak since China first vanquished the infection that emerged in Wuhan two years ago. Despite ever more extreme measures aimed at shutting it down -- from testing an infant more than 70 times to locking down Shanghai Disneyland on one case -- the pathogen is proving harder than ever to wipe out.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-22/china-more-dedicated-than-ever-to-covid-zero-as-it-battles-delta>

New Lockdown

COVID-19: Austria coronavirus lockdown feels not just like a health crisis, but also a cultural, social and political storm

On Saturday, the streets of Vienna were packed with shoppers. Today, they were quiet, if not deserted. Yes, this is lockdown, but it isn't quite the eerie emptiness of 18 months ago. Instead, the Austrian capital feels like it's closed for business. The clothes shops, the ice rinks and, of course, the Christmas markets. All shut. Maria Fridrichovsky normally sells chestnuts in one of the markets. She told me she is "angry" at what has happened, bemused that only 65% of the Austrian population is vaccinated against COVID. "I feel very sad because the companies are closed down," she said. "We sell chestnuts and potatoes to the people. It should be lovely here at Christmas. "But now it's so hard - many people are calling up by telephone - what can I do? What can I tell them? It's so sad."

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-austria-coronavirus-lockdown-feels-not-just-like-a-health-crisis-but-also-a-cultural-social-and-political-storm-12476017>

Slovakia "intensively" looking at COVID lockdown possibility, PM says

The Czech Republic and Slovakia banned unvaccinated people from hotels, pubs, hairdressers and most public events from Monday after COVID-19 cases filled hospital intensive-care wards, and were mulling harsher steps to stem the resurgent pandemic. The central European neighbours both acted a step behind Austria, which first set restrictions on unvaccinated people but went for a full lockdown on Monday as the region became the world's latest COVID-19 hotspot.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/slovakia-intensively-looking-covid-lockdown-possibility-pm-says-2021-11-22/>

Austria's Return to Covid-19 Lockdown Is Met With Anger, Resignation

The country introduced the toughest in an array of restrictions that are spreading across Europe, sometimes meeting violent protests, as governments seek to fend off a steep rise in Covid-19 cases.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/austrias-return-to-covid-19-lockdown-is-met-with-anger-resignation-11637578887>