

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 28th Apr 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### China's Hangzhou, Home to Alibaba, to Start Mass Covid Testing

The Chinese city of Hangzhou, home to tech giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., will start mass testing for Covid-19, while cases in Shanghai fell for a fifth day. The testing drive will cover most of Hangzhou's downtown area, with 10,000 free test sites to be set up, the municipal government said in a statement late Wednesday. It urged residents to get tested every 48 hours. Just a short train ride from Shanghai, the city of around 12 million people is home to a small but notable network of tech companies, including games maker NetEase Inc. and video-surveillance product company Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-27/china-s-hangzhou-home-to-alibaba-to-start-mass-covid-testing-l2i7d9qa>

#### England Covid-19 Cases: 70% of Country Has Been Infected

Around seven in 10 people in England are likely to have had coronavirus since the early months of the pandemic, new figures suggest. An estimated 38.5 million people in private households - or 70.7% of the population - have had at least one infection since the end of April 2020. The figures have been compiled by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) using data from its long-running Covid-19 infection survey. The survey began in England on April 27 2020, which means the estimates do not cover most of the initial wave of the virus that began in early March.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-22/-seven-in-10-people-in-england-have-had-covid-19-since-early-in-pandemic>

#### China Economy Data Paints Different Tale Than Party Line

Even in a country where the credibility of official statistics frequently comes under question, a data release on April 18 looked particularly suspicious. It showed China's gross domestic product growth accelerated to 4.8% in the first quarter, from 4% in the final three months of 2021, even though property sales worsened and lockdowns were imposed in dozens of cities. With access to data from satellites, independent surveys, and industrial output, China watchers can make corrections to the official picture. Their information suggests the reality is worse, though some government numbers seem reliable. Here's a user's guide on China's economic statistics this year. With the real estate sector and demand for materials accounting for 20% of GDP, the rest of the economy would have to grow at a 7% to 8% pace to produce the official growth number for the first quarter. Logan Wright, head of China markets at Rhodium Group LLC, says that would imply a "highly improbable" acceleration from pre-pandemic growth rates.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-27/china-economy-data-paints-different-tale-than-party-line>

#### EU estimates up to 80% of population has had COVID

The European Commission said that between 60% and 80% of the EU population was estimated to have been infected with COVID-19, as the bloc enters a post-emergency phase in which mass reporting of cases was no longer necessary. In preparing for this less acute phase, European Union governments should ramp up COVID-19 immunisations of children, the bloc's executive body said, signalling it was considering plans to develop antivirals.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-looks-ramping-up-covid-vaccinations-kids-developing-antivirals-2022-04-27/>

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### **Fauci: US 'out of the pandemic phase'**

President Biden's chief medical adviser Anthony Fauci on Tuesday said that the United States has moved "out of the pandemic phase" with COVID-19. "We don't have 900,000 new infections a day and tens and tens and tens of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths. We are at a low level right now," the infectious diseases expert said to host Judy Woodruff during an appearance on "PBS NewsHour." "So, if you're saying if we are out of the pandemic phase in this country? We are," Fauci added. Fauci, however, warned that the U.S. was not going to "eradicate" the virus and said that globally the pandemic is "ongoing." "We're not going to eradicate this virus," Fauci said. "If we can keep that [viral] level low, and intermittently vaccinate people — and I don't know how often that would have to be, Judy, that might be every year, that might be longer — in order to keep that level low."

<https://thehill.com/news-by-subject/healthcare/3467436-fauci-us-out-of-the-pandemic-phase/>

### **Mexico says coronavirus now endemic, not pandemic**

The Mexican government said Tuesday that COVID-19 has passed from a pandemic to an endemic stage in Mexico, meaning authorities will treat it as a seasonally recurring disease. Mexico never enforced face mask requirements, and the few partial shutdowns of businesses and activities were lifted weeks ago. "It is now retreating almost completely," said President Andrés Manuel López Obrador. New case numbers have declined. But that may be because Mexico, which never did much testing, is now offering even fewer tests.

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/mexico-coronavirus-now-endemic-pandemic-84326485>

### **The US is out of the Covid-19 pandemic phase, Fauci says**

The United States is "certainly, right now, in this country, out of the pandemic phase," Dr. Anthony Fauci, President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser and the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said on PBS's "NewsHour" on Tuesday.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/the-us-is-out-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-phase-fauci-says/ar-AAWErY2>

### **Dutch celebrate first King's Day holiday without COVID curbs since 2019**

The city streets around the Netherlands streamed with festival-goers wearing orange on Wednesday in celebration of the national holiday King's Day in traditional fashion -- with music and open-air markets -- for the first time since 2019, without COVID-19 restrictions. King Willem-Alexander, who turns 55 on Wednesday and whom the holiday celebrates, was visiting the southern city of Maastricht with his family, keeping a promise that had been postponed for two years due to the pandemic. In Amsterdam, where Kings' Eve is a party comparable to New Year's Eve, the streets of the historic centre have been mobbed with tens of thousands of celebrants since late Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/dutch-celebrate-first-kings-day-holiday-without-covid-curbs-since-2019-2022-04-27/>

### **Malaysia to lift more COVID curbs, eases mask mandate**

Malaysia will ease more COVID-19 curbs from the start of next month, including lifting restrictions on those who are not vaccinated against the coronavirus and scrapping the need to wear masks outdoors, its health minister said. The Southeast Asian nation has seen some of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks in the region, but infection surges have since subsided amid a ramped up vaccination programme. Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said on Wednesday people will now be able to enter public premises regardless of their vaccination status, except those who have tested positive for COVID-19 or unvaccinated travellers undergoing quarantine.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/malaysia-lift-more-covid-curbs-eases-mask-mandate-2022-04-27/>

### **Beijing in race to detect COVID infections as locked-down Shanghai in distress**

Millions in Beijing's largest district on Wednesday took their second COVID-19 tests this week as the Chinese capital tried to keep an outbreak of dozens from spiralling into a crisis that could force it

into a distressing Shanghai-type lockdown.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/beijing-presses-with-mass-covid-testing-locked-down-shanghai-seethes-2022-04-27/>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Japan to limit scope of fourth jabs to older people and those at higher risk**

In Japan, the health ministry adopted a plan Wednesday to limit eligibility for fourth doses of COVID-19 vaccines to those age 60 or over, as well as those who are age 18 or over with underlying conditions. Arrangements for fourth doses, positioned as part of a publicly funded emergency vaccination program, are aimed at preventing people from developing severe COVID-19 symptoms. Under the program, those age 60 or older will be obliged to make efforts to receive fourth vaccine shots.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/04/27/national/japan-fourth-covid-vaccines/>

### **Transparency urged to raise COVID-19 vaccine uptake**

Issues around vaccine acceptance must be addressed alongside equity of access and logistics if the goal of vaccinating 70% of the world's population against COVID-19 is to be met, says a report by global health policy experts. Emerging causes of so-called "vaccine hesitancy," described by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines," should be monitored continually in order to better understand the problem, according to the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP).

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-04-transparency-urged-covid-vaccine-uptake.html>

### **Australians urged to get flu shots as Covid deaths rise and winter sets in**

Australians have been urged to get their flu vaccinations to help hospitals cope in the months ahead as they deal with a rise in Covid-19 cases, and as some states experience double-digit daily death tolls. At least 42 coronavirus deaths were recorded on Wednesday in Australia, with 10 in New South Wales, 13 in Victoria, 10 in Western Australia and nine in Queensland. There were 4,027 Covid deaths nationally in the first quarter of 2022, data from the Actuaries Institute shows, including 1,668 in January, 1,520 in February and 839 in March. So far in April there have been 770 deaths.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/27/australians-urged-to-get-flu-shots-as-covid-deaths-rise-and-winter-sets-in>

### **Covid News: Vaccines for Young Children Delayed by Incomplete Data, F.D.A. Official Says**

The Food and Drug Administration has not yet cleared a coronavirus vaccine for children under 5 because the vaccine manufacturers have not finished their applications for authorization to distribute doses, a top official at the agency suggested on Tuesday. The official — Dr. Peter Marks, who oversees vaccine regulation for the F.D.A. — said the agency will release a schedule this week for outside expert review of vaccines for the nation's 18 million children younger than 5. That is the only age group still not eligible for coronavirus vaccination. Despite growing pressure, including from Congress, the F.D.A. might not rule on whether to authorize a pediatric vaccine dose for that group until June, administration officials have said.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/04/26/world/mandates-cases-vaccine-covid-19>

### **EU looks at ramping up COVID vaccinations of kids, developing antivirals**

The European Commission said that between 60% and 80% of the EU population was estimated to have been infected with COVID-19, as the bloc enters a post-emergency phase in which mass reporting of cases was no longer necessary. In preparing for this less acute phase, European Union governments should ramp up COVID-19 immunisations of children, the bloc's executive body said, signalling it was considering plans to develop antivirals. "It is estimated that between 60% to 80% of

the EU population has by now had COVID," EU health commissioner Stella Kyriakides told a news conference. The EU public health agency said reported cases had covered about 30% of the European population so far, but if unreported infections were added, cases could be as high as 350 million, about 77% of the European population. With a recent drop in infections and deaths linked to COVID-19, the EU is now shifting away from mass testing and reporting of cases, Kyriakides said, confirming what Reuters reported on Tuesday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-looks-ramping-up-covid-vaccinations-kids-developing-antivirals-2022-04-27/>

### **U.S. to widen COVID antiviral pill distribution**

Pfizer's COVID-19 pill Paxlovid is packaged in Ascoli. U.S. President Joe Biden's administration is aiming to expand access to COVID-19 oral antiviral treatments like Pfizer Inc's Paxlovid by doubling the number of locations at which they are available, the White House said on Tuesday. Pharmacies participating in the federal pharmacy program for distributing antiviral treatments will be able to order the free treatments directly from the U.S. government starting this week. Currently, pharmacies depend on states to obtain the pills. The government sends the treatments to select pharmacies, as well as directly to states and community centers. Under the current system, the treatments are available in around 20,000 locations. The administration expects to boost their direct distribution to more than 30,000 locations soon and reach 40,000 sites over the coming weeks, the White House said. "Treatments are really the next phase of this pandemic, where we have to make the treatments, these highly effective treatments, widely available," Dr. Ashish Jha, the White House COVID-19 response coordinator, said in an interview on CNN. Demand for Paxlovid has been unexpectedly light due to complicated eligibility requirements, reduced COVID testing, and potential for drug interactions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-widen-covid-antiviral-pill-distribution-2022-04-26/>

### **Turkey ready to lift all COVID-19 measures, Erdogan says**

President Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday that Turkey is ready to lift all measures against the coronavirus, adding that mask wearing will no longer be obligatory indoors. Speaking after the final meeting of the advisory science council, Erdogan said masks will still be mandated on public transport and in medical institutions until daily new cases drop below 1,000. Turkey had previously lifted the requirement to wear masks outdoors and in indoor areas with good ventilation.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkey-ready-lift-all-covid-19-measures-erdogan-says-2022-04-26/>

### **Financial lobby group urges Shanghai to ease COVID rules for staff stuck in offices**

A leading lobby group for global financial services firms has urged Shanghai authorities to let hundreds of exhausted staff go home after a month-long strict COVID-19 lockdown that has kept them in office buildings. The Asia Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (ASIFMA) in a letter dated April 26 urged the authorities to let financial firms rotate staff who need to work from offices.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/financial-lobby-group-urges-shanghai-ease-covid-rules-staff-stuck-offices-2022-04-27/>

### **Exclusive: EU to move away from emergency phase of COVID pandemic - document**

The European Commission is set to say the EU has entered a new post-emergency phase of the pandemic in which testing should be targeted and monitoring of COVID-19 cases should be similar to sample-based flu surveillance, according to a draft document seen by Reuters. The shift comes amid a gradual drop of cases and a fall in the number of deaths linked to COVID-19, thanks to the spread of the less virulent Omicron variant and the immunisation of over 70% of the EU population, with half of the population having received also a booster shot.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/exclusive-eu-move-away-emergency-phase-covid-pandemic-document-2022-04-27/>

### **Hangzhou Starts Mass Covid Tests; Shanghai Cases Drop**

The Chinese city of Hangzhou, home to tech giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd., will start mass testing for Covid-19, while cases in Shanghai fell for a fifth day. The testing drive will cover most of Hangzhou's downtown area, with 10,000 free test sites to be set up, the municipal government said in a statement late Wednesday. It urged residents to get tested every 48 hours. Just a short train ride from Shanghai, the city of around 12 million people is home to a small but notable network of tech companies, including games maker NetEase Inc. and video-surveillance product company Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Co.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-27/china-s-hangzhou-home-to-alibaba-to-start-mass-covid-testing-l2i7d9qa?srnd=premium-europe>

### **Partisan Exits**

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#### **Covid Zero Criticism Is New Test for China Censorship**

It began when state media accounts on Weibo, China's Twitter equivalent, promoted the hashtag "The U.S. is the country with the largest human-rights deficit." Tens of thousands of Chinese internet users turned the accusation around onto Beijing. They criticized not only China's Covid response of strict stay-at-home orders and minimal financial support for households but also wider social problems: long working hours, high property prices, violence against women, and censorship itself. "Our doors are locked down. Our pets are killed. Our medical resources are wasted so that people with acute illness can't be treated," wrote one poster. "The American government is so horrible, I'm so lucky to be born in China," read a typically ironic post.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-27/covid-zero-criticism-is-new-test-for-china-censorship>

#### **Court says UK's nursing home COVID-19 policy was illegal**

A British court ruled Wednesday that the government's decision to discharge hospital patients into nursing homes without testing them for COVID-19, which led to thousands of deaths early in the pandemic, was illegal. Two High Court judges said the policy from March and April 2020 was unlawful because it failed to take into account the infection risk that non-symptomatic carriers of the virus posed to older or vulnerable people. The judges said officials did not consider other options, including keeping such patients separate from other nursing home residents for a time as much as practically possible. "This was not a binary question - a choice between on the one hand doing nothing at all, and on the other hand requiring all newly admitted residents to be quarantined," the judges said. The ruling came in response to a lawsuit by two women whose fathers died when the virus swept through the homes where they lived. Their lawyers said the decisions that allowed COVID-19 to spread among the elderly and vulnerable was "one of the most egregious and devastating policy failures in the modern era."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-matt-hancock-high-court-london-boris-johnson-b2066577.html>

#### **COVID-19: Court finds New Zealand's quarantine allocation system infringed on rights**

A high court judge rules that the system used to control New Zealand's borders during part of the coronavirus pandemic operated as an unjustified limit on the right of New Zealanders to enter their country.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-court-finds-new-zealands-quarantine-allocation-system-infringed-on-rights-12599856>

#### **COVID-19: Government broke the law by failing care home residents who died of coronavirus, High Court rules**

The government broke the law by discharging untested hospital patients into care homes during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the High Court has ruled. The case was brought by Dr Cathy

Gardner and Fay Harris whose fathers, Michael Gibson and Donald Harris, died after testing positive for coronavirus. In a ruling on Wednesday, Lord Justice Bean and Mr Justice Garnham concluded that policies contained in documents released in March and early April 2020 were unlawful because they failed to take into account the risk to elderly and vulnerable residents from non-symptomatic transmission of the virus.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-government-broke-the-law-by-failing-care-home-residents-who-died-of-coronavirus-high-court-rules-12599918>

### **New Zealand High Court finds quarantine allocation system infringed on rights**

New Zealand's once lauded COVID-19 response took a hit on Wednesday, when a High Court judge ruled a system used to allocate places in border quarantine facilities infringed on some citizens' right to return home. Citizens looking to return had to either make emergency requests to the government or secure a spot in state quarantine facilities, called MIQ. Due to demand outstripping hotel rooms, a type of lottery system was introduced. It left tens of thousands of expatriate New Zealanders cut off from families back home. Critics called the system unfair, something that the judgement released Wednesday by High Court Justice Jillian Mallon agreed with. Mallon said restrictions preventing a person from being able to enter their country for three months couldn't be justified and evidence indicates at least some New Zealanders experienced unreasonable delays.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/new-zealand-high-court-finds-quarantine-allocation-system-infringed-rights-2022-04-27/>

### **Continued Lockdown**

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#### **COVID-19: Is China's Shanghai lockdown an overreaction?**

Shanghai, the most populous city in China, has been under lockdown for the past month as it pursues a 'zero-COVID' strategy for eradicating the virus. The country's approach aims to cut transmission as soon as possible, using stringent measures such as short and targeted shutdowns and quick testing schemes where cases are found. Despite this, cases of the highly transmissible Omicron variant have risen in Shanghai and other cities over the past month.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-is-chinas-shanghai-lockdown-an-overreaction-12599422>

#### **Beijing presses on with mass COVID testing as locked-down Shanghai seethes**

Millions of people in Beijing took their second COVID-19 tests of the week on Wednesday as the Chinese capital tried to keep an outbreak numbering in the dozens from spiralling into a crisis like the one the locked-down city of Shanghai is enduring. Evidence that Shanghai's month-long isolation has become almost unbearable for many of the city's 25 million people is emerging on an almost daily basis on the country's heavily censored internet.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/beijing-presses-with-mass-covid-testing-locked-down-shanghai-seethes-2022-04-27/>

#### **Shanghai seeks 'societal zero COVID' with rounds of testing**

Shanghai city authorities said Wednesday they will start rounds of COVID-19 testing over the next few days to determine which neighborhoods can safely be allowed a limited amount of freedom of movement, as residents in Beijing watch carefully on word for whether the capital city will lock down. On Wednesday, China reported 14,222 new cases, the vast majority of which were asymptomatic. The country is battling its largest outbreak since the pandemic was first reported in Wuhan in late December 2019. Shanghai's vice head of its health committee, Zhao Dandan, announced Wednesday that the city would begin another round of testing for city residents over the next few days to determine which districts were lower risk.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-business-shanghai-wuhan-469235110d103463dd9479a3161a7eb1>

#### **Satellite Data Show Extent of China's Crippling Lockdowns**

Chinese port activity fell below levels seen during the first coronavirus outbreak in 2020 and construction has plummeted, satellite data show, suggesting official economic figures will likely worsen as Covid lockdowns spread. Satellite images are becoming an important real-time data tool to measure the impact of China's worst coronavirus outbreak since 2020. Official numbers are released only monthly, and are increasingly coming under scrutiny as Beijing sticks to its ambitious growth target of about 5.5% even though its Covid Zero approach has forced major hubs like Shanghai to shut down. New York-based SpaceKnow, which tracks activity at more than 1,300 factories from space, said manufacturing output remained strong through the lockdowns in March and early April, although inventories are building up. That's likely a sign of logistical snarls as coronavirus restrictions cause major disruptions and shortages of trucks able to move goods to ports and around the country.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-26/data-from-satellites-shows-extent-of-china-s-crippling-lockdowns>

### **Fed up with COVID lockdown, bankers, fund managers looking to leave Shanghai**

Finance sector professionals in Shanghai are preparing to move back to Hong Kong and other offshore centres after spending only a few years in the Chinese city as a harsh COVID-19 lockdown has hurt their business prospects and upended daily lives. Thousands of bankers, traders and investors in the financial hub of the world's second-largest economy have found themselves confined to their homes, with some even struggling to secure food and other essentials for their families.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/fed-up-with-covid-lockdown-bankers-fund-managers-looking-leave-shanghai-2022-04-26/>

### **Scientific Viewpoint**

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#### **CDC Data Plan Is Too Vague, Lacks Deadlines, U.S. Watchdog Says**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's plan to modernize its data operations is too vague, lacks deadlines and doesn't assign clear responsibility for completing the project, a government watchdog said in a report. The CDC's Data Modernization Initiative was launched in 2020 as part of a broader push to overhaul the country's public health information systems and improve capacity to respond to threats like Covid-19. While the pandemic pushed some of those efforts into high speed, the Government Accountability Office report said that the agency's overall plan "does not articulate the specific actions, time frames, and allocation of roles and responsibilities needed to achieve its objectives." And while the CDC has been given \$1.1 billion to move ahead with its data plans, the agency had yet to fully lay out plans for spending the money, according to the GAO, the investigational arm of Congress.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-27/cdc-data-plan-is-too-vague-lacks-deadlines-u-s-watchdog-says>

#### **Measles cases jump 79% in 2022 after COVID hit vaccination campaigns**

Measles cases jumped by 79% in the first two months of this year compared to 2021, after COVID-19 and lockdowns disrupted child vaccination campaigns around the world, according to data from UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO). In January and February, there were 17,338 measles cases reported worldwide, up from 9,665 in the same period last year. Measles is a very contagious disease that can be particularly dangerous for young children and babies. It spreads more quickly than Ebola, flu or COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/measles-cases-jump-79-2022-after-covid-hit-vaccination-campaigns-2022-04-27/>

#### **CIDRAP to develop vaccine roadmap for future coronavirus threats**

New coronaviruses armed with the capacity to cause severe human disease are becoming more frequent, raising the stakes for global preparedness, along with a need for a vaccine that could

broadly protect against the most dangerous ones, such as SARS-CoV-2. To help jump-start the process, the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) at the University of Minnesota announced today that it has received \$1 million in grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to create a Coronavirus Vaccines Research and Development (R&D) Roadmap.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/04/cidrap-develop-vaccine-roadmap-future-coronavirus-threats>

### **Covid-19 cases that return after antiviral treatment puzzle doctors**

The pink line on Erin Blakeney's first positive Covid-19 test was so light that she almost didn't believe it. But there was no denying the fever and sore throat that developed overnight, just a few days after she and her husband attended a large memorial service in late March. The couple wore KN95 masks, but many others in attendance had not, even as the service stretched past 90 minutes. Blakeney, a 43-year-old researcher at the University of Washington's School of Nursing, is a breast cancer survivor. The Seattle resident says she doesn't meet any strict definition of being immunocompromised, which can raise someone's Covid-19 risk. Both Blakeney and her husband are fully vaccinated and boosted. But she didn't want to take chances, because she's taking medications to prevent a cancer recurrence and she lost a family member to Covid-19 in November 2020.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/27/health/paxlovid-covid-rebound/index.html>

### **More than half of Americans have had Covid, including three of four children**

More than half of Americans show signs of a previous Covid-19 infection, including three out of every four children, according to a new report released on Tuesday. The findings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) come after researchers examined blood samples from more than 200,000 Americans and looked for virus-fighting antibodies made from infections, not vaccines. They found that signs of past infection rose dramatically between December and February, when the more contagious Omicron variant surged through the US.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/26/us-covid-infections-antibodies-children>

### **Pfizer, BioNTech seek U.S. authorization of COVID-19 booster shot for younger kids**

Pfizer Inc and its partner BioNTech SE said on Tuesday that they had submitted an application to the U.S. health regulator for the authorization of a booster dose of their COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 years. The companies earlier this month reported data from a mid-to-late stage study showing a third dose of their shot increased protection against the original coronavirus version and the Omicron variant among children in the age group.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-biontech-file-us-authorization-covid-19-booster-shot-children-2022-04-26/>

### **More than half of Americans have had COVID infections, U.S. study shows**

Following the record surge in COVID-19 cases during the Omicron-driven wave, some 58% of the U.S. population overall and more than 75% of younger children have been infected with the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic, according to a U.S. nationwide blood survey released on Tuesday. The study issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention marks the first time in which more than half of the U.S. population has been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus at least once, and offers a detailed view of the impact of the Omicron surge in the United States.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/more-than-half-americans-have-had-covid-infections-antibody-study-2022-04-26/>

### **WHO chief says we are 'increasingly blind' on COVID transmission**

The head of the World Health Organization on Tuesday urged countries to maintain surveillance of coronavirus infections, saying the world was "blind" to how the virus is spreading because of falling testing rates. "As many countries reduce testing, WHO is receiving less and less information about transmission and sequencing," Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a news

conference at the U.N. agency's headquarters in Geneva.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/who-chief-says-we-are-increasingly-blind-covid-transmission-2022-04-27/>

### **Vice President Harris Taking Pfizer's Paxlovid to Treat Covid**

Vice President Kamala Harris will take Pfizer Inc.'s Paxlovid Covid-19 therapy pill after testing positive for the virus earlier Tuesday, a treatment decision coinciding with the Biden administration's push to expand access to the medication. Harris, 57, decided to start the treatment "after consultation with her physicians," spokeswoman Kirsten Allen said in a tweet. Harris tested positive for the coronavirus earlier Tuesday but was not exhibiting symptoms of the disease, her office said. She spent the previous week in her home state of California and had not seen President Joe Biden since the April 18 White House Easter egg roll.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-27/vice-president-harris-taking-pfizer-s-paxlovid-to-treat-covid>

### **Lawmakers ask FDA to lay out plans for reviewing COVID vaccines for young children**

Even though most people in the U.S. have been eligible for COVID-19 vaccines and boosters for quite some time, children under 5 still don't have vaccine options. Now, lawmakers are asking the FDA to lay out its plans in this age group—and address a perceived delay for Moderna's product. Yesterday, Congress's Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis sent a letter (PDF) to FDA Commissioner Robert Califf, M.D., requesting a briefing on the status of COVID-19 vaccines for the under 5 age group. The letter comes after U.S. chief medical adviser Anthony Fauci, M.D., indicated on CNN that the FDA is considering holding off on reviewing Moderna's vaccine candidate in order to authorize it at the same time as Pfizer's to "not confuse people" with a staggered rollout, the lawmakers wrote. That could lead to a potential delay of several weeks for Moderna's shot, they said.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/congress-requests-fda-explanation-delay-under-5-covid-19-vaccine>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Italy reports 29575 coronavirus cases on Tuesday, 146 deaths**

Italy reported 29,575 COVID-19 related cases on Tuesday, against 24,878 the day before, the health ministry said, while the daily number of deaths rose to 146 from 93. Italy has registered 162,927 deaths linked to COVID-19 since its outbreak emerged in February 2020, the second-highest toll in Europe after Britain and the eighth highest in the world. The country has reported 16.2 million cases to date. Patients in hospital with COVID-19 - not including those in intensive care - stood at 10,328 on Tuesday, up from 10,050 a day earlier.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/italy-reports-29575-coronavirus-cases-tuesday-146-deaths-2022-04-26/>

### **China's capital in race to detect COVID cases, avoid Shanghai's distress**

Millions of people in Beijing took their second COVID-19 tests of the week on Wednesday as the Chinese capital tried to keep an outbreak numbering in the dozens from spiralling into a crisis like the one the locked-down city of Shanghai is enduring. Evidence that Shanghai's month-long isolation has become almost unbearable for many of the city's 25 million people is emerging on an almost daily basis on the country's heavily censored internet.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/beijing-presses-with-mass-covid-testing-locked-down-shanghai-seethes-2022-04-27/>

### **China Covid: Shanghai Cases Fall Fourth Day; Beijing Finds More Infections**

Shanghai hinted at an easing of lockdown measures as coronavirus infections dropped to the lowest in three weeks, while the number of new cases in Beijing remained below 50, in a potential sign authorities are starting to bring the twin outbreaks under control. Cases in Shanghai fell for a fourth consecutive day to 13,562, though the city added another 48 fatalities. While the financial hub remains in an unprecedented lockdown that's left much of the city's 25 million residents confined to

their homes for a month or more, an official signaled on Wednesday there may be some easing for certain areas.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-27/shanghai-cases-fall-a-fourth-day-beijing-finds-more-infections>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Beijing enforces lockdowns, expands COVID-19 mass testing**

Police and new fencing restricted who could leave a locked-down area in Beijing on Tuesday as authorities in the Chinese capital stepped up efforts to prevent a major COVID-19 outbreak like the one that has all but shut down the city of Shanghai. People lined up for throat swabs across much of Beijing as mass testing was expanded to 11 of the city's 16 districts. Another 22 cases were found in the last 24 hours, Beijing health officials said at a late afternoon news conference, bringing the total to 92 since the outbreak was discovered five days ago. That is tiny in comparison to Shanghai, where the number of cases has topped 500,000 and at least 190 people have died. No deaths have been reported from the still-nascent outbreak in Beijing.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-business-health-china-beijing-546e033cadf71cea75f606ad65ee0e82>