

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 1st Jun 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Cuba lifts mask mandate as vaccination rate soars and deaths plummet**

Cuba on Tuesday lifted a mask mandate in place for two years following a successful vaccination drive that health officials say has contributed to a sharp drop in cases and nearly three weeks without a single death from COVID-19. The island, whose communist government has long sought to stand out by providing a free healthcare system that focuses on preventative treatment such as vaccinations, developed its own COVID vaccines and became the first country in the world to begin the mass vaccination of kids as young as age 2. rge Luis Banos/Pool via REUTERS HAVANA, May 31 (Reuters) - Cuba on Tuesday lifted a mask mandate in place for two years following a successful vaccination drive that health officials say has contributed to a sharp drop in cases and nearly three weeks without a single death from COVID-19. The island, whose communist government has long sought to stand out by providing a free healthcare system that focuses on preventative treatment such as vaccinations, developed its own COVID vaccines and became the first country in the world to begin the mass vaccination of kids as young as age 2. Cuba has since vaccinated 94% of its population with at least one dose of its home-grown vaccines, according to a Reuters tally. Health minister José Ángel Portal said the wide-ranging vaccination program had led to a "radical change" in contagion and health risks and prompted the decision to do away with masks in most scenarios.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/cuba-lifts-mask-mandate-vaccination-rate-soars-deaths-plummet-2022-05-31/>

#### **Shanghai Unveils 50-Point Plan to Return to Normalcy**

Banks will be asked to renew SME loans; asset managers are asked to set up global or regional investment management centres in Shanghai. Shanghai has unveiled a comprehensive 50-point plan to reopen the city and its economy in stages, with the goal of restoring normalcy to business and daily life following the two-month-long lockdown. Last week, Premier Li Keqiang called for efforts to be made to stabilise the economy and restore investor confidence. New Covid-19 cases in Shanghai have also fallen fell to their lowest levels since mid-March. The 50-point plan to reopen the city covers measures to help enterprises reduce their operating costs, incentives to prevent job losses, and broader reopening measures. Companies will no longer need to be on a "whitelist" to resume production starting from 1 June. Under the existing whitelist system, about 6,000 companies are allowed to resume production provided they adhere to certain pandemic prevention guidelines.

<https://www.regulationasia.com/shanghai-unveils-50-point-plan-to-return-to-normalcy/>

#### **After Ontario's COVID-19 school closures, a responsive recovery plan is critical**

Three years into the pandemic, it's clear that Canada's provinces have been hampered by a lack of a comparative cross-Canada analysis of school closures and the effects on students. What we do know about the disruptive impact of school closures on Ontario and other provinces comes largely from a June 2021 Ontario Science Table study documenting the extent of school closures from province-to-province.

<https://theconversation.com/after-ontarios-covid-19-school-closures-a-responsive-recovery-plan-is-critical-177514>

#### **As UK Covid cases fall to lowest level for a year, what could the future look like?**

After enduring record-breaking levels of Covid in the past six months, Britain has seen cases fall to their lowest for a year. But as the country eases back into a life more normal, will the disease remain

in the background – or is another resurgence on its way? Science editor Ian Sample explains how the virus is changing – and why one expert thinks infection rates “are not going to get down to very low numbers again in our lifetimes”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/as-uk-covid-cases-fall-to-lowest-level-for-a-year-what-could-the-future-look-like>

### **Israel to cancel quarantine for coronavirus patients?**

Professor Salman Zarka, Israel's coronavirus czar, estimates that quarantine for coronavirus-positive individuals will be canceled. Speaking to reporters, Prof. Zarka estimated that in the middle of June, those testing positive for COVID-19 will no longer need to quarantine. Though both the infection coefficient and the percent positive have held relatively steady since mid-April, Prof. Zarka also claimed that the fifth wave of the virus is continuing to slow down

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/news/328520>

### **Italy Scraps COVID-19 Entry Rules For Travellers As Cases Drop**

Italy said it was dropping the requirement to show proof of coronavirus vaccination, recent recovery or a negative test before entering the country. The health ministry announced that the requirement to show a so-called "Green Pass" to enter Italy "will not be extended" when it expires on May 31. Italy was the first European country hit by coronavirus in early 2020 and has had some of the toughest restrictions, including requiring all workers to show a Green Pass.

<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/italy-scraps-covid-19-entry-rules-for-travellers-as-cases-drop-3024149>

### **Shanghai starts to dismantle fences as Covid lockdown due to end**

Shanghai authorities have begun dismantling fences around housing compounds and ripping police tape off public squares and buildings, to the relief of the city's 25 million residents, before a painful two-month lockdown is lifted at midnight. On Monday evening, some of the people allowed out of their compounds for brief walks took advantage of suspended traffic to congregate for a beer and ice cream on deserted streets, but there was a sense of wariness and anxiety among residents.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/shanghai-starts-to-dismantle-fences-as-covid-lockdown-due-to-end>

### **South Africa Had Fifth Covid Wave Despite 97% Antibody Protection**

South Africa experienced a fifth wave of Covid-19 infections despite 97% of the population having antibodies due to previous infections or vaccination, the results of a blood survey show. Examination of 3,395 samples from blood donors earlier this year, at the tail end of the fourth wave of infections, showed that 87% of South Africans had previously been infected with the virus, while just over 97% had either had a previous infection or a vaccination or both. The study was lead by Stellenbosch University's DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Epidemiological Modeling and Analysis and the South African National Blood Service.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-30/s-africa-had-fifth-covid-wave-despite-97-antibody-protection>

### **China's Covid Outbreak Wanes as Curbs Eased to Boost Economy**

China reported the fewest new Covid-19 cases in almost three months, with the easing of outbreaks in Beijing and Shanghai emboldening authorities to relax some of the strictest virus controls of the pandemic and move to stimulate the country's faltering economy. Shanghai will lift lockdown measures for residents in low-risk areas, allowing them to leave and enter their compounds freely starting from Wednesday, according to a statement from the municipal government on Monday. The city will resume taxi and ride hailing services while allowing cars on the road in low-risk areas. Cases in the financial hub fell to 67 for Sunday from 122 on Saturday with bus and subway services to reopen in an orderly manner from June 1.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-29/china-covid-outbreak-wanes-as-virus-curbs-eased-to-boost-economy>

## Exit Strategies

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### **Beijing Says Outbreak Under Control as City Eases Curbs**

China's capital Beijing will loosen mobility curbs in several districts from Sunday after authorities said its outbreak is under control, while total case numbers in the financial hub of Shanghai continued to decline. Most public transportation services including buses, subways and taxis will resume in three districts including Chaoyang, according to Xu Hejian, a spokesman for the Beijing city government. Shopping centers outside of controlled areas in the city will also be allowed to reopen with capacity limits on the number of people. Chaoyang is home to Beijing's central business district, most foreign embassies and expatriates.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-28/shanghai-reports-covid-case-in-community-total-infections-fall>

### **Shanghai moves toward ending 2-month COVID-19 lockdown**

Shanghai authorities say they will take major steps Wednesday toward reopening China's largest city after a two-month COVID-19 lockdown that has set back the national economy and largely confined millions of people to their homes. Already, a steady stream of people strolled in the Bund, the city's historic waterfront park, on a pleasant Tuesday night, some taking selfies against the bright lights of the Pudong financial district on the other side of the river. Elsewhere, people gathered outside to eat and drink under the watch of police deployed to discourage large crowds from forming. Lu Kexin, a high school senior visiting the Bund for the first time since late March, said she went crazy being trapped at home for so long. "I'm very happy, extremely happy, all the way, too happy," she said. "I could die."

<https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/shanghai-moves-toward-ending-2-051418852.html>

### **After two months, a scarred Shanghai's COVID-19 lockdown ends**

Following two months of frustration, despair and economic loss, Shanghai's draconian COVID-19 lockdown ended at midnight on Wednesday morning, prompting celebrations tempered with fear that an outbreak could return. Most of Shanghai's 25 million residents can now freely leave home, return to work, use public transport and drive their cars - a moment that for many in China's largest and most cosmopolitan city felt like it would never arrive. At midnight, small groups gathered in the city's former French Concession neighbourhood whistled, shouted "ban lifted" and clinked glasses of champagne.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/after-two-months-scarred-shanghais-covid-19-lockdown-ends-2022-05-31/>

### **COVID-19 border measures to stay until at least end of June: PHAC**

The Public Health Agency of Canada says COVID-19 restrictions at the border will remain in place for at least another month. The agency made the announcement on Twitter, the day after Parliament voted down a Conservative opposition motion to revert to pre-pandemic rules for travel. Several pandemic restrictions are in place at Canadian airports and land borders, including vaccine mandates, random COVID-19 tests and the requirement that international travellers answer pandemic-related questions on the ArriveCan app.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8882250/covid-19-border-measures-canada-phac/>

### **COVID-19 vaccination rates for P.E.I. children lag, but province still ahead of national average**

COVID-19 vaccination rates on P.E.I. are among the highest across Canada — with 94 per cent of people over 12 now fully vaccinated. But when it comes to those aged five to 11, that rate falls. According to the province's vaccination data, as of May 22, 54 per cent of children aged five to 11 were fully vaccinated and 68 per cent had one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-vaccine-uptake-children-covid-19-1.6471483>

### **Politics and pandemic fatigue doom California's covid vaccine mandates**

In January, progressive California Democrats vowed to adopt the toughest covid vaccine requirements in the country. Their proposals would have required most Californians to get the shots to go to school or work — without allowing exemptions to get out of them. Months later, the lawmakers pulled their bills before the first votes. One major vaccine proposal survives, but faces an uphill battle. It would allow children ages 12 to 17 to get a covid-19 vaccine without parental permission. At least 10 other states permit some minors to do this.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220531/Politics-and-pandemic-fatigue-doom-Californiae28099s-covid-vaccine-mandates.aspx>

### **Push to get more people fully vaccinated against Covid over half term holiday**

Health bosses in Leicestershire are urging families to use the half term holiday to go and get jabbed together. The schools in both the city and the county are off this week and alongside the fun days out, people are being urged to make sure they get fully vaccinated against Covid-19. Clinics across the county are still open - although the Platinum Jubilee bank holidays mean Thursday and Friday will see them close again.

<https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/push-more-people-fully-vaccinated-7146586>

### **WA's mandatory COVID-19 vaccination rules set to stay as experts see no reason to change**

Throughout the ebb and flow of WA's various COVID restrictions, one rule has remained steady for months now — workplace vaccination requirements. Since late last year, about 60 per cent of WA workers have been required to be vaccinated to continue working and from today, this cohort will need to have had their third booster shot. But with WA achieving world-leading vaccination rates and about a quarter of people having some level of immunity from having recently had the virus, questions have been raised about the utility of those mandates. However, experts and the government say there should be little change, at least in the short term.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-31/wa-coronavirus-update-workplace-vaccine-mandates-set-to-stay/101109400>

### **China's Covid Cases Drop Below 100 for The First Time Since Early March**

China's daily virus cases fell below 100 for the first time since early March after months of strict curbs, though omicron's contagiousness means the reprieve from infections and Beijing's intensive Covid Zero response may only be temporary. The country reported 97 new cases for Monday, according to the National Health Commission. The financial hub of Shanghai, formerly the epicenter of China's outbreak, reported 31 cases, as the city prepared to further loosen curbs. Beijing found 18, though the capital continues to see infections popping up in the community despite extensive contact tracing and isolation.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-31/china-s-virus-cases-drop-below-100-as-flareups-test-covid-zero>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **Legal challenges to Queensland's COVID vaccine mandate get underway**

The first of several civil cases, brought on by dozens of Queensland frontline workers who are challenging their COVID-19 vaccine mandates, including police officers and paramedics, begins in Brisbane.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-31/legal-challenges-to-queenslands-covid-vaccine-mandate/13906978>

### **Former UK minister says PM Johnson should resign over lockdown parties**

Conservative lawmaker Jeremy Wright, a former British minister and attorney general, said on Monday that Prime Minister Boris Johnson should resign, joining a growing number of MPs who have withdrawn their support over the "partygate" scandal. A damning official report published last week detailed a series of illegal parties at Johnson's Downing Street office during COVID-19 lockdowns,

prompting a new wave of calls for Johnson to step aside.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/former-uk-minister-says-pm-johnson-should-resign-over-lockdown-parties-2022-05-30/>

### **German police mount raids in COVID-19 aid fraud probe**

Police raided homes and offices in northern and western Germany on Tuesday as part of an investigation into a case involving five men accused of fraudulently applying for 26 million (\$28 million) worth of pandemic-linked aid. The German government drew up a series of aid packages to help businesses withstand the impact of lockdowns and other restrictions at the height of the coronavirus pandemic. The suspects in this investigation are suspected of making at least 363 aid applications under false pretenses “for their own purposes and for companies that commissioned them,” according to a police statement.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-politics-health-germany-982e083d22f173eb5d160082bdd610bc>

## **Continued Lockdown**

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### **Next Hong Kong leader says city must work harder at COVID-19**

Hong Kong’s incoming chief executive, John Lee, said Tuesday the city still has to work hard at controlling the coronavirus and boosting vaccination rates. Lee, who returned home after meeting with Communist Party officials in Beijing, said Hong Kong needs to control the spread of COVID-19 to create favorable conditions for a resumption of regular travel with mainland China. “We still have cases of infection, between 200 to 300 cases (daily), and vaccination rates for the second dose have yet to reach 90%,” Lee said to reporters after landing at Hong Kong's airport.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/hong-kong-leader-city-work-harder-covid-19-85083623>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Evidence on COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness and duration of protection against Omicron**

In the present study, researchers reported results from an interim analysis of a living systematic review (LSR) summarizing evidence on VE and duration of protection against SARS-CoV-2 Omicron. For the LSR, the researchers included studies investigating VE against SARS-CoV-2 infection among people aged 12 years or older for European Medicine Agency (EMA) approved vaccines. For the current analysis, only the studies which investigated the mentioned outcomes due to SARS-CoV-2 Omicron or during the Omicron period were considered. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) literature database created by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) library was searched for studies published from October 23, 2021, to January 14, 2022, regardless of publication status or language.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220531/Evidence-on-COVID-19-vaccine-effectiveness-and-duration-of-protection-against-Omicron.aspx>

### **Philippine FDA grants approval for Spikevax Covid-19 vaccine for children**

The Philippine FDA has granted approval for Moderna’s Covid-19 vaccine, Spikevax, for use in children who are aged six to 11 years.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/philippine-fda-spikevax-children/>

### **Study shows low social cohesion is a factor in reducing vaccine responses**

Loneliness and social stresses can have a negative impact on the antibody response to Covid-19 vaccines, new research has revealed. University of Limerick researchers have found that lower neighbourhood cohesion is associated with antibody response to Covid-19 vaccines. In a study published in the journal Brain, Behaviour and Immunity, the research team demonstrated that lower social cohesion also made people feel lonelier, and this was an additional factor in reducing Covid-19 vaccine responses. The report stated that social cohesion is the degree of social connectedness and solidarity among different community groups within a society, including levels of trust and connectedness between individuals and across community groups.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/study-shows-low-social-cohesion-is-a-factor-in-reducing-vaccine-responses-41706314.html>

### **International study reveals factors contributing to COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among healthcare providers**

A new 23-country study by a multidisciplinary team of researchers in the journal *Vaccine*, published by Elsevier, sheds light on the factors that contribute to COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among healthcare providers. To assess the associations between self-reported vaccine hesitancy and a number of sociodemographic and COVID-19 vaccine perception factors, CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy (CUNY SPH) Senior Scholar Jeffrey Lazarus, PhD, Dean Ayman El-Mohandes, MBBCh, MD, MPH, FAAP, and colleagues from the School of Health Administration at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada and the Barcelona Institute for Global Health, Barcelona, Spain, developed a cross-sectional survey relating to perceptions of risk, efficacy, safety and trust, and current COVID-19 vaccine uptake.

<https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/954271>

### **GSK offers £2.6bn for US vaccine maker after failing to bring Covid jab to market**

GSK has offered to pay up to \$3.3bn (£2.6bn) for a US vaccine maker, after the pandemic pushed the importance of biotechnology to the top of the healthcare agenda. The British pharmaceutical giant is set to pay \$2.1bn (£1.6bn) upfront, and up to \$1.2bn (£951m) more if the biopharmaceutical firm Affinivax meets specified development milestones, GSK said in a statement this morning. Affinivax, based in Boston, focuses on vaccines which target pneumococcal disease, which includes pneumonia, meningitis, bloodstream infections and milder diseases such as sinusitis.

<https://www.cityam.com/gsk-offers-2-6bn-for-us-vaccine-maker-after-failing-to-bring-covid-jab-to-market/>

### **Leicester study finds promising link between treatment of 'long Covid' and vaccinations**

Symptoms of 'long Covid' can decrease after being vaccinated, a Leicester study has found. The research conducted by the University of Leicester was published in the *British Medical Journal*. It found that a first dose of the Covid-19 vaccination was associated with a reduction in the likelihood of continuing symptoms of the virus by 12.8 per cent. A second dose showed a further reduction of 8.8 per cent, according to the study. Between February 3 and September 5, 2021, a team of academics and government statisticians assessed the results of the Office for National Statistics' COVID-19 Infection Survey to examine the health outcomes of 28,356 people who had received a vaccine after contracting the coronavirus. More than 23 per cent of the participants went on to experience symptoms of long Covid 12 weeks after they were infected with the virus.

<https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/leicester-study-finds-promising-link-7147610>

### **Japan Panel OKs J&J Coronavirus Vaccine**

A panel of Japan's health ministry Monday endorsed a ministry plan to give pharmaceutical approval to U.S. drugmaker Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine. The ministry is expected to grant the approval soon to what will be the fifth COVID-19 vaccine that can be used in the country. The ministry does not plan to make inoculations of the vaccine free of charge at public expense because it has already secured necessary amounts of vaccines. Japan has not signed to buy the J&J vaccine. The J&J product is a viral vector vaccine like the one made by British drugmaker AstraZeneca PLC. It can be administered only to people aged 18 or above. Only a single shot is necessary for the J&J vaccine unlike the previously approved vaccines, all of which require two shots at an interval of at least three to four weeks.

<https://www.nippon.com/en/news/yjj2022053000845/>

### **Study struggles to explain why Quebec has high COVID-19 death toll but low excess death**

Researchers are having a hard time explaining why Quebec had the country's highest official

COVID-19 death toll despite a relatively low number of excess deaths between March 2020 and October 2021. A new study released Monday by the Canadian Medical Association Journal tried to answer that question but came up short. "I would say at this point it's something we need to understand," Kimberlyn McGrail, professor at University of British Columbia's school of population and public health, said in an interview. The study, titled Excess mortality, COVID-19 and health-care systems in Canada, says Quebec had 4,033 excess deaths between March 2020 and October 2021, but reported 11,470 COVID-19 fatalities — almost three times more.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/stud-covid-19-deaths-1.6471557>

### **How nasal COVID-19 vaccines can help prepare for infection where it starts**

Imagine inhaling just a few drops of liquid or mist to get protected from COVID-19. That is the idea behind nasal COVID-19 vaccines, and they have been getting a lot of attention recently as a spray or liquid. These nasal vaccines would be based on the same technology as normal vaccines given by injection. But as Mayuresh Abhyankar, a University of Virginia researcher who studies infectious diseases and works on nasal vaccines, explains, vaccinating someone right where the coronavirus is likely to start its attack comes with many immunological benefits.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/how-nasal-covid-19-vaccines-can-help-prepare-for-infection-where-it-starts>

### **Long term implications of covid-19 in pregnancy**

Complications in pregnancy, including maternal and perinatal deaths, increased with each wave of the covid-19 pandemic. By contrast, serious illness fell in other high risk groups because of vaccines and approved treatments. More than a year after the UK's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) opened up covid-19 vaccination to pregnant women, 40% of women giving birth have still not received a first dose.<sup>2</sup> This is despite a positive benefit-risk profile, endorsement in guidelines, and public health campaigns. Worryingly, 69.5% of black women giving birth have not received any covid-19 vaccine. Meanwhile the JCVI has chosen not to include pregnant women in its interim autumn booster plans. Strategies for treating covid-19 in pregnancy and potential long term complications are also underused.<sup>1</sup> A large portion of the diffidence for both vaccination and treatment in pregnancy stems from the continued exclusion of pregnant women from much of the pre-approval drug development process. This results in delayed or even absent data on benefit-risk profiles and a dangerous spiral of indecision

<https://www.bmj.com/content/377/bmj-2022-071296>

### **Swissmedic weighing new COVID booster recommendation for children**

Swiss drugs regulator Swissmedic said on Tuesday it is reviewing an application from pharmaceutical company Pfizer for a new dosage recommendation for a COVID-19 booster shot for children. The regulator said it was looking at the data submitted and assessing the benefits and risks of recommending a booster shot administered at least six months after basic immunisation for children between ages 5 and 11.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/swissmedic-weighing-new-covid-booster-recommendation-children-2022-05-31/>

### **Covid Booster Shots Are Key to Stopping Severe Infection: Study**

A third dose of messenger RNA Covid-19 vaccine provides a key boost to immunity against the coronavirus, regardless of the original type of immunization, researchers said. An mRNA booster following an initial course of two shots of the same type is the most effective way to prevent non-severe Covid infections, according to an analysis of studies published Wednesday in the BMJ medical journal. Adding a third mRNA shot to other primary vaccination regimens raises protection to almost the same level, the authors from the Chinese University of Hong Kong said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-31/third-mrna-shot-offers-best-covid-19-immunity-study-says>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Russia records 3,526 daily COVID-19 cases — crisis center**

Russia's COVID-19 case tally rose by 3,526 over the past day to 18,331,363, the anti-coronavirus crisis center reported on Tuesday, TASS reports. In relative terms, the growth rate reached 0.02%. As many as 2,536 people were hospitalized with COVID-19 in Russia over the past day, up 184.6% from a day earlier. The number of hospitalized patients increased in 72 regions, while in eight regions the figure increased. The situation remained unchanged in five regions. A day earlier, 891 people were rushed to hospitals

[https://www.inform.kz/en/russia-records-3-526-daily-covid-19-cases-crisis-center\\_a3939155](https://www.inform.kz/en/russia-records-3-526-daily-covid-19-cases-crisis-center_a3939155)

### **4,985 new Covid-19 cases reported in S'pore, up from 2,389 cases on May 30**

The number of new Covid-19 cases reported in Singapore surged on Tuesday (May 31) to 4,985 said the Ministry of Health (MOH) in an update on its website. This was more than double the 2,389 cases reported on Monday (May 30), but lower than last Tuesday's (May 24) cases, where 5,727 were reported. Case numbers on Tuesdays tend to be higher compared with the rest of the week as they reflect the spike in infections after the weekend, when more people are out in various social settings.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/4985-new-covid-19-cases-reported-in-spore-up-from-2389-cases-on-may-30>

### **Covid-19: Only one hospital admission in Wales in a day**

For the second time in the pandemic, only one patient has been admitted to hospital in Wales with Covid in a day. The single admission, on Monday, was in Cardiff and Vale, according to latest figures from Digital Health and Care Wales. This has only happened once before during the pandemic, on a day in late June last year. Meanwhile, deaths involving Covid-19 were at their lowest for nine months. According to the latest statistics, numbers of Covid hospital admissions - and also those in critical care - are at their lowest since mid-July 2.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-61648723>

### **Beijing reports 16 new symptomatic COVID cases for May 30, 2 asymptomatic cases**

China's capital Beijing reported 16 new domestically transmitted symptomatic coronavirus cases for May 30, up from eight a day earlier, the city government said on Tuesday. Local asymptomatic cases fell to two from four from the previous day, it said.

<https://www.investing.com/news/coronavirus/beijing-reports-16-new-symptomatic-covid-cases-for-may-30-2-asymptomatic-cases-2831724>

### **Hong Kong to distribute 240,000 RAT kits following sewage COVID-19 detection**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government said Tuesday that it will distribute about 240,000 sets of COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits to people in some areas of the city as part of a follow-up on recent detection of the COVID-19 virus in sewage samples. The test kits will be distributed to residents, cleaning workers, and property management staff working in the areas with positive sewage testing results showing relatively high viral loads, in order to help identify infected persons, it said. The HKSAR government also urged RAT kit users to report any positive results for COVID-19 via the government's online platform.

<http://english.news.cn/20220531/9de07576abee4efe88a6a4af10b91477/c.html>

### **Covid 19 Omicron outbreak: 8436 community cases, 18 virus-related deaths, 389 people in hospital**

There are 8436 new community cases of Covid-19 in New Zealand today. The Ministry of Health also reported a further 18 virus-related deaths. They include three people from Northland, two from the Auckland region, one from Waikato, one from Taranaki, two from MidCentral, two from Nelson Marlborough, three from Canterbury, two from West Coast and two from the Southern region. One person was aged in their 50s, two were in their 60s, one was in their 70s, eight were in their 80s and six were over 90. Ten were male and eight were female, the ministry said in today's update. This

brings the total number of publicly reported Covid-19 deaths to 1172.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-omicron-outbreak-8436-community-cases-18-virus-related-deaths-389-people-in-hospital/YZSTUGXSAQGFUR7WF5ID75BTN4/>

### **Covid-19 weekly deaths lowest since last summer**

The number of deaths involving coronavirus registered each week in England and Wales has fallen to its lowest level for nine months. A total of 547 deaths registered in the seven days to May 20 mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This is down 24% on the previous week and is the lowest total since early August 2021. It is the third week in a row that deaths have decreased, which suggests the figures are now on a downwards trend. There have been similarly sharp falls in recent months in the number of Covid-19 infections and patients in hospital with the virus. Infections in both England and Wales hit an all-time high at the end of March, but in England they have dropped to levels last seen in November 2021 and in Wales they are back to where they were in September.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/covid-19-weekly-deaths-lowest-24108972>

### **Shanghai Ready to Exit Lockdown as Covid Cases Drop**

After four straight days with no Covid-19 deaths and with new cases at their lowest levels since early March, Shanghai is preparing to end more than two months of lockdowns. The easing of restrictions takes effect Wednesday, but already Tuesday evening social-media posts showed residents swarming the streets, chanting and dancing and posting images of themselves eating out at local restaurants. The majority of the 25 million residents of China's financial capital can leave their homes and return to work starting Wednesday, the Shanghai government said. Aside from those in high-risk areas, all businesses can reopen, buses and trains will resume normal operations, and restrictions on private vehicles will be lifted. Shopping malls and other commercial centers can run at 75% of capacity.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/shanghai-ready-to-exit-lockdown-as-covid-cases-drop-11654018379>