

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 1st Aug 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **Covid Booster: US to Buy \$1.7 Billion of Moderna Omicron-Specific Vaccine (MRNA)**

Moderna Inc. said it secured a \$1.74 billion contract to supply the US government with its new omicron-specific vaccine. The deal is for 66 million doses of a new booster that includes the existing shot as well as components targeting omicron subvariants of the Covid-19 virus. The agreement also allows the government to purchase another 234 million doses of the company's booster shots in the future. "Moderna's mRNA platform is enabling us to rapidly create mRNA-1273.222, a bivalent vaccine that specifically targets omicron subvariants BA.4 and BA.5, the most prevalent variants of concern in the US today," Stephane Bancel, the company's chief executive officer, said in a statement.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-29/covid-19-booster-shots-for-omicron-moderna-signs-1-7-billion-us-contract>

#### **Inside the super-secure Swiss lab trying to stop the next pandemic**

The setting is straight from a spy thriller: Crystal waters below, snow-capped Swiss Alps above and in between, a super-secure facility researching the world's deadliest pathogens. Spiez Laboratory, known for its detective work on chemical, biological and nuclear threats since World War Two, was tasked last year by the World Health Organization to be the first in a global network of high-security laboratories that will grow, store and share newly discovered microbes that could unleash the next pandemic.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/inside-super-secure-swiss-lab-trying-stop-next-pandemic-2022-07-31/>

#### **UK Pays Lenders £352 Million So Far to Cover Virus Loan Losses**

The UK has paid lenders £352 million (\$429 million) to cover losses so far on virus loans to small businesses, a number that's likely to grow further with £1.6 billion of further claims lodged by the lenders at the end of March. Metro Bank Plc, which lent a total of £1.4 billion under the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, has received £122 million as of March 31 after claims for 3,015 loans were processed and payment released, according to a report published Thursday. Barclays Plc received £88 million and Starling Bank £61 million. The £352 million represents about 0.7% of the 1.5 million loans at the end of March. About 3.2% are in the claimed stage, 4% of the loans are in default and 7.4% are in arrears, the data shows.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-29/uk-pays-lenders-352-million-so-far-to-cover-virus-loan-losses>

#### **How the Covid-19 Pandemic Changed Americans' Health for the Worse**

The ripple effects of the Covid-19 pandemic's influence on nearly every aspect of health in America are becoming clear. Covid-19 has killed more than one million people in the U.S., a toll mounting by some 350 people a day. A range of other chronic diseases and acute threats to health also worsened during the pandemic, data show, as people missed screenings, abandoned routines and experienced loss and isolation. "In addition to just the terrible burden of a million Americans dying, there are other repercussions from the pandemic that we need to address," said Chrissie Juliano, executive director of Big Cities Health Coalition, an organization of city health officials.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-the-covid-19-pandemic-changed-americans-health-for-the-worse-11659260165>

**NHS staff with 'disabling conditions' after COVID-19 should be able to claim benefits, say**

## **government advisers**

By listing health complications from COVID-19 as part of the Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit scheme, people affected by the virus would qualify for up to £188.60 in weekly benefits.

<https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/nhs-staff-with-disabling-conditions-after-covid-19-should-be-able-to-claim-benefits-say-government-advisers>

## **Japan's factory output zooms as China eases COVID curbs**

Japan's factories ramped up output at the fastest pace in more than nine years in June as disruptions due to China's COVID-19 curbs eased, a welcome sign for policymakers hoping the economic outlook will improve. Separate data showed retail sales rose for the fourth straight month in June, supporting the view that rising consumption helped the economy return to growth in the second quarter after contracting in January-March

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/japans-factory-output-zooms-china-eases-covid-curbs-2022-07-29/>

## **If you are high risk, do not wait for updated COVID vaccines, experts say**

People at high risk of severe disease who have yet to get a second COVID-19 booster should not wait for next-generation, Omicron-targeted vaccines expected in the fall, five vaccine experts told Reuters. In many countries, including the United States, the BA.5 Omicron subvariant of the virus is surging, but current vaccines continue to offer protection against hospitalization for severe disease and death.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/if-youre-high-risk-do-not-wait-updated-covid-vaccines-experts-say-2022-07-29/>

## **AstraZeneca Outlook Raised as Covid Therapies Offset Vaccine Drop**

AstraZeneca Plc raised its outlook for 2022 revenue as sales of its Covid-19 therapies offset a decline in its coronavirus vaccine. The UK drugmaker now expects revenues to rise by more than 20% this year, according to a statement Friday that showed its second-quarter earnings beat analysts' estimates. The positive results, helped by a lower-than-anticipated tax bill, were largely due to Evusheld, AstraZeneca's Covid antibody therapy for people with compromised immune systems. Sales for the company's Covid offerings are now expected to remain flat compared to a year ago, erasing a previously estimated drop of 20%. AstraZeneca shares fell more than 3% in early trading before paring back slightly.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-29/astrazeneca-raises-2022-outlook-as-covid-treatments-drive-profit>

## **LA Holds Off Reimposing Mask Mandate as Covid Cases Fall**

Los Angeles held off reimposing a universal indoor masking mandate as new Covid-19 infections and hospitalizations begin to go down. Local public health officials have been warning for the past two weeks that a mask mandate may be reinstated, after the county surpassed 10 hospitalizations per 100,000 residents and entered a "high" community alert level. However, officials decided to pause a masking order as fresh county-level data indicate the community is likely entering a lower transmission threshold, Los Angeles County Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer told reporters Thursday.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-28/los-angeles-holds-off-reimposing-mask-order-as-covid-cases-fall>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **President Biden Tests Positive for Covid-19 Again**

President Biden tested positive for Covid-19 again on Saturday morning in what his physician called a rebound case. Dr. Kevin O'Connor said in a letter made public by the White House that Mr. Biden isn't experiencing any symptoms and is feeling well. Dr. O'Connor noted a small number of people

who take the antiviral medication Paxlovid to treat Covid-19 sometimes test positive again for the virus in what public health officials call "rebound positivity." The president first tested positive for Covid-19 on July 21 and tested negative on July 26 and the following days, according to the White House. In his initial bout of Covid-19, Mr. Biden experienced mild symptoms, including a runny nose, fatigue and a dry cough.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/biden-tests-positive-for-covid-19-again-11659207612>

### **Biden again tests positive for COVID, says he feels fine**

U.S. President Joe Biden tested positive for COVID-19 again on Saturday in what the White House doctor described as a "rebound" case seen in a small percentage of patients who take the antiviral drug Paxlovid. Biden, 79, who emerged from COVID isolation on Wednesday after testing positive on July 21, said he was feeling fine. He will now return to strict isolation and will cancel planned trips to his home in Wilmington and work trip in Michigan, the White House said. Biden held public events on Wednesday and Thursday, but none on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-again-tests-positive-covid-19-feels-quite-well-white-house-2022-07-30/>

### **Netherlands to offer more COVID-19 boosters in September**

Seeking to head off a fall COVID-19 surge, the government of the Netherlands said Friday that everyone age 12 years and over would be eligible for a vaccine booster shot in a campaign expected to start in September. The Dutch health ministry said in a statement that an advisory panel of experts recommended the new round of vaccinations "to maintain protection against serious illness and death, to ensure access to health care" and to prevent problems caused by issues such as staff shortages. The booster shots will be with updated vaccines if they are proven to offer better protection against new mutations of the coronavirus — and if the vaccines have received approval from the European Medicines Agency.

<https://apnews.com/a1027bbd9f4d59f3509e4ec8eaf5e923>

### **U.S. Reaches \$1.74 Billion Deal With Moderna for Updated Covid-19 Shots**

The Biden administration said it would spend \$1.74 billion to buy 66 million doses of Moderna Inc.'s updated Covid-19 vaccine, as well as the option to purchase up to 234 million additional doses, as part of a fall booster campaign. The deal Friday, which follows an agreement to buy 105 million doses of updated vaccines from Pfizer Inc. and partner BioNTech SE, is expected to give the federal government enough shots for a booster push as early as September. Under the latest deal, the U.S. government has the option to buy up to an additional 234 million doses from Moderna. The Food and Drug Administration would still need to authorize the shots, which the companies are modifying to provide stronger protection against the latest offshoots of the Omicron variant. The current vaccines help protect against severe illness and death but haven't been as effective against Omicron as earlier strains of the virus. To prevent a wave of cases when the weather turns cold, the Biden administration has been laying the groundwork for a fall booster campaign.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-reaches-1-74-billion-deal-with-moderna-for-updated-covid-19-shots-11659098919>

### **U.S. government to buy 66 million doses of Moderna's new omicron COVID-19 vaccine**

The Biden administration said Friday it has reached an agreement with Moderna to buy 66 million doses of the company's next generation of COVID-19 vaccine that targets the highly transmissible omicron variant, enough supply this winter for all who want the upgraded booster. The order of the bivalent shot follows the announcement last month that the federal government had secured 105 million doses of a similar vaccine from rival drugmaker Pfizer. Both orders are scheduled for delivery in the fall and winter, assuming regulators sign off on their effectiveness. The Pentagon said the Moderna contract was worth \$1.74 billion.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/moderna-omicron-covid-19-vaccine-66-million-doses-booster-shots/>

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<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/netherlands-offer-covid-19-boosters-september-87618590>

### **U.S. sets \$1.74 billion deal with Moderna for updated COVID vaccine**

The U.S. government said on Friday it agreed to a \$1.74 billion deal for 66 million doses of a Moderna Inc COVID vaccine updated for the Omicron subvariant for use in a fall and winter booster campaign, sending Moderna shares up 3%. Combined with 105 million doses the government already agreed to buy from Pfizer Inc and partner BioNTech SE for \$3.2 billion, the latest deal puts the U.S. booster dose supply at about 171 million shots.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-supply-66-mln-doses-bivalent-covid-booster-us-2022-07-29/>

### **Queensland's COVID-19 plan isn't panning out the way authorities thought it would. Is it time to do more?**

It has never been clearer that Queensland's days of being highly COVID cautious are over. As the sub-variant BA.5 drives up cases, hospitalisations and deaths, the state's leaders have repeatedly urged everyone to stay home if sick, get boosters and wear masks. But they've steered away from a return to restrictions or mask mandates. A shift in approach to an emphasis on "personal responsibility" was foreshadowed with the rollout of vaccines. There was also a belief that a combination of vaccination and infection would make "living with COVID" tolerable.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-29/qld-coronavirus-covid19-wave-health-modelling-hospitalisation/101272616>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **China's factory activity contracts unexpectedly in July as COVID flares up**

China's factory activity contracted unexpectedly in July after bouncing back from COVID-19 lockdowns the month before, as fresh virus flare-ups and a darkening global outlook weighed on demand, a survey showed on Sunday. The official manufacturing purchasing managers' Index (PMI) fell to 49.0 in July from 50.2 in June, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said, below the 50-point mark that separates contraction from growth and the lowest in three months.

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/chinas-factory-activity-contracts-unexpectedly-july-official-pmi-2022-07-31/>

### **Government's slow COVID-19 response worsened health inequalities, warns BMA**

The final instalment of a BMA review that will be submitted to the public inquiry on the pandemic also said that disabled people across the UK were more likely to die of COVID-19 than non-disabled people, and also to experience worse mental health. The BMA said the UK entered the pandemic 'on the back foot' because of underfunding of public health and an absence of cross-government accountability exacerbating health inequalities. BMA chair Professor Philip Banfield blamed the tardiness of the government's response to COVID-19 for worsening health inequalities.

<https://www.gponline.com/governments-slow-covid-19-response-worsened-health-inequalities-warns-bma/article/1794402>

### **Over Half of Brits Receive More in Benefits Than They Pay in Tax During Pandemic**

More than half of Britons received more in welfare than they paid in tax last year as the government response to the pandemic drove a big reduction in inequality, according to the Office for National

Statistics. A value-added-tax cut, increased spending on welfare and health, and a steep reduction in household consumption meant that 54.2% of individuals took more support from the state than they contributed in the first year of the pandemic to March 2021. The ONS said it was "both the greatest proportion and the largest annual increase" since records began in 1977. In 2020, 47.5% were net recipients. Income support programs, such as furlough, were not a benefit.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-29/over-half-of-britons-were-net-welfare-recipients-during-pandemic>

### **Austria mourns suicide of doctor targetted by anti-COVID vaccine campaigners**

Austrian leaders appealed for national unity after a doctor who faced death threats from anti-vaccination activists and coronavirus pandemic conspiracy theorists took her own life. "Let's put an end to this intimidation and fear mongering. Hate and intolerance have no place in our Austria," President Alexander Van der Bellen said, hailing Lisa-Maria Kellermayr as a doctor who stood for healing people, protecting them from disease and taking a cautious approach to the pandemic. ZURICH, July 30 (Reuters) - Austrian leaders appealed for national unity after a doctor who faced death threats from anti-vaccination activists and coronavirus pandemic conspiracy theorists took her own life. "Let's put an end to this intimidation and fear mongering. Hate and intolerance have no place in our Austria," President Alexander Van der Bellen said, hailing Lisa-Maria Kellermayr as a doctor who stood for healing people, protecting them from disease and taking a cautious approach to the pandemic. "But some people have been enraged by this. And these people scared her, threatened her, first on the internet and then also in person, directly in her practice." The body of the doctor -- who had often given media interviews about fighting the coronavirus pandemic and promoting vaccinations -- was found in her office in Upper Austria on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/austria-mourns-suicide-doctor-targetted-by-anti-vaccine-campaigners-2022-07-30/>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Reinfection, severe outcome more common with BA.5 variant; virus spike protein toxic to heart cells**

The following is a summary of some recent studies on COVID-19. They include research that warrants further study to corroborate the findings and that has yet to be certified by peer review. Reinfections, severe outcomes may be more common with BA.5. Compared with the earlier Omicron BA.2 subvariant, currently dominant Omicron BA.5 is linked with higher odds of causing a second SARS-COV-2 infection regardless of vaccination status, a study from Portugal suggests.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/reinfection-severe-outcome-more-common-with-ba5-variant-virus-spike-protein-2022-07-28/>

### **Pfizer and BioNTech initiate phase 2 study of 'enhanced' COVID-19 vaccine**

Pfizer and BioNTech have initiated a phase 2 study evaluating a new version of the COVID-19 vaccine that the companies hope will better protect against the virus. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, BNT162b5, consists of RNAs encoding 'enhanced' prefusion spike proteins for the SARS-CoV-2 wild-type strain and an Omicron variant, with the aim of increasing the magnitude and breadth of the immune response. The vaccine candidate will be evaluated in a US-base study, enrolling around 200 participants aged 18 to 55 who have already received one booster dose at least 90 days prior to their enrolment in the study. The participants will be divided into subgroups based on the number of months since their last dose. The study does not include a placebo. BNT162b5 is the first of multiple vaccine candidates with an enhanced design, the companies stated, representing their long-term COVID-19 vaccine strategy to overcome the relatively short-lived immune response seen with their first-generation vaccine, BNT162b2.

[https://www.pmlive.com/pharma\\_news/pfizer\\_and\\_biontech\\_initiate\\_phase\\_2\\_study\\_of\\_enhanced\\_covid-19\\_vaccine\\_1452821](https://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/pfizer_and_biontech_initiate_phase_2_study_of_enhanced_covid-19_vaccine_1452821)

### **Serious self-harm in young people jumped during strict COVID-19 lockdowns - study**

Serious self-harm among young people jumped during strict COVID-19 lockdowns, new research shows. The study found that boys needing urgent support from emergency services doubled, and then tripled for children in care. Meanwhile, girls continued to be over-represented in self-harm figures, researchers said. It comes after another study suggested that people living in poverty are more likely to suffer with long COVID. Psychiatrists have called for more funding and development of community mental health services due to the findings, which have been published in the Royal College of Psychiatrists' BJPsych Open

<https://news.sky.com/story/serious-self-harm-in-young-people-jumped-during-strict-covid-19-lockdowns-study-12660992>

### **Could next-generation vaccines finally end the covid-19 pandemic?**

The coronavirus vaccines have been a brilliant success, possibly saving tens of millions of lives. But they haven't ended the pandemic and their effectiveness has been eroded by the evolution of variants of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. A new generation of covid-19 vaccines is needed – but what exactly should this involve? The US plans to roll out boosters that target the BA.4 and BA.5 omicron subvariants.

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2331481-could-next-generation-vaccines-finally-end-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

### **Reinfection, severe outcome more common with BA.5 variant; virus spike protein toxic to heart cells**

Compared with the earlier Omicron BA.2 subvariant, currently dominant Omicron BA.5 is linked with higher odds of causing a second SARS-COV-2 infection regardless of vaccination status, a study from Portugal suggests. From late April through early June, researchers there studied 15,396 adults infected with the BA.2 variant and 12,306 infected with BA.5. Vaccines and boosters were equally effective against both sublineages, according to a report posted on Monday on medRxiv ahead of peer review. However, 10% of BA.5 cases were reinfections, compared to 5.6% of BA.2 cases, which suggests a reduction in protection conferred by previous infection against BA.5 compared to BA.2, the researchers said. Moreover, the vaccines appeared to be less effective in reducing the risk of severe outcomes for BA.5 compared with BA.2.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/reinfection-severe-outcome-more-common-with-ba5-variant-virus-spike-protein-2022-07-28/>

### **CanSinoBIO's inhaled COVID booster stronger against BA.1 Omicron subvariant than Sinovac shot**

Chinese vaccine firm CanSino Biologic's inhalation-based candidate elicited a better antibody response as a booster against the BA.1 Omicron sub-variant than Sinovac's shot, but the antibody level dropped in months, clinical trial data showed. The result came as top political leaders in China called for proper tracking of virus mutation and developing of new vaccines and treatments in the country's effort to refine its COVID control strategy.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/cansinobios-inhaled-covid-booster-stronger-against-ba1-omicron-subvariant-than-2022-07-29/>

### **If you're high risk, do not wait for updated COVID vaccines, experts say**

People at high risk of severe disease who have yet to get a second COVID-19 booster should not wait for next-generation, Omicron-targeted vaccines expected in the fall, five vaccine experts told Reuters. In many countries, including the United States, the BA.5 Omicron subvariant of the virus is surging, but current vaccines continue to offer protection against hospitalization for severe disease and death.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/if-youre-high-risk-do-not-wait-updated-covid-vaccines-experts-say-2022-07-29/>

### **AstraZeneca lifts revenue guidance on COVID treatment**

AstraZeneca (AZN.L) said it expected prescriptions of its COVID therapy to drive sales growth of more than 20% this year, as company reported second-quarter profit that topped analyst estimates. The injection, called Evusheld, which is designed to protect against COVID infection for at least six months, has been deployed in many countries for people with compromised immune systems who see little or no benefit from vaccines.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/astrazeneca-beats-q2-profit-revenue-estimates-2022-07-29/>

### **Covid Leaves Some 5% of People With Faulty Sense of Smell, Taste**

Losing the sense of smell and taste has become a hallmark of coronavirus infection. But a new study finds that the problem persists in some 5% of patients, disrupting their everyday lives and providing yet another set of symptoms to chalk up to long Covid. The scientists drew their conclusion after reviewing 18 studies involving more than 3,600 patients. The findings mean that as many as 15 million patients may be affected worldwide, they said in a paper published Thursday in the UK medical journal BMJ. Women were less likely to recover than men, the research found, as were patients whose symptoms were strongest or who had nasal congestion. Overall, most patients regained their sense of smell and taste within three months.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-27/covid-leaves-some-5-of-people-with-faulty-sense-of-smell-taste>

### **How long-term Covid-19 immunity paves the way for universal Covid-19 vaccines**

In recent months, scientists have also learned that the immune cells that provide lasting protection — known as memory B cells and T cells — can keep the worst effects of the most recent versions of the virus at bay, even if they were trained to corral older strains of SARS-CoV-2. Vaccine researchers are expanding their focus from antibodies to these memory immune cells as the new discoveries open a path toward universal coronavirus vaccines. Universal vaccines, however, are still a long way off — possibly years — drawing on approaches never used before. “That’s a scientific challenge,” said Anthony Fauci, chief medical adviser to the president, during the summit.

<https://www.vox.com/23272815/covid-19-universal-vaccine-long-term-immunity-antibodies-b-cells>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **Rise of Omicron subvariants sends UK staff absence soaring**

“I visited the Butler’s Wharf Chop House earlier this week and when I asked about our general manager he was off with Covid,” said the D&D boss, who oversees 2,000 staff in outlets across the UK, France and US. For Gunewardena, the latest round of pandemic-induced shortages have compounded an already tough market. The number of people going off sick has “gone up considerably,” he said, “piling on the problems that our London restaurants have already faced from a 10% staff shortage, the heatwave during which we lost 30% of our business and the £1m we lost in the week of rail and tube strikes”. The rapid spread of Covid-19 infections in the past month has sent the number of workers taking sick leave soaring, according to official figures, making staff shortages even worse and forcing many employers to shut down parts of their business.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/jul/28/rise-of-omicron-subvariants-sends-uk-staff-absence-soaring>

### **Omicron outbreak: 7605 Covid cases, 41 deaths - Bloomfield's final message for NZ**

Deaths linked to Covid have hit 41 in today's update, with 7605 new community cases of the virus reported. A total of 799 people are in hospital with the virus, including 25 patients in ICU. Of today's 41 deaths, one was aged in their 50s, one was in their 60s, eight were in their 70s, 12 were in their 80s and 19 were aged over 90. Of these people, 22 were women and 19 were men. Fourteen of these people were from Auckland region, three were from Waikato, two were from Bay of Plenty, three were from Lakes, two were from Hawke's Bay, one was from Taranaki, two were from MidCentral, two were from Whanganui, two were from Wellington region, seven were from

Canterbury, three were from Southern.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-omicron-outbreak-7605-covid-cases-41-deaths-ashley-bloomfields-final-mess-age-to-team-of-5-million/V4NMVEIU5VCYDZEHINJ225I7F4/>

### **Covid-19 infections drop for first time in two months**

Covid-19 infections in the UK have dropped for the first time in two months, though prevalence of the virus remains high, new figures show. It is the first time total infections have fallen since the week ending May 28 and is the biggest sign so far that the current wave may have peaked. This comes as the number of hospital patients with Covid-19 has also started to fall. Estimates suggest 3.2 million people in private households in the UK have had the virus in the week to 20 July, down 16% from 3.8 million in the previous week, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). However, infections are not on a clear downwards trend in all parts of the country.

<https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/covid-19-infections-drop-first-24622744>

### **COVID infections fall in New Zealand, worst case scenario likely avoided**

New Zealand's government said on Wednesday new COVID-19 cases were trending down and it looked likely the country would avoid a feared worst-case scenario of 20,000 infections daily. In the last seven days there were on average 8,111 new cases daily of COVID, down from a seven-day rolling average of 9,367 new cases in the week prior, according to Health Ministry data released on Wednesday. Currently 808 people were in hospital with COVID, which was also a lower number than earlier, data showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/covid-infections-fall-new-zealand-worst-case-scenario-likely-avoided-2022-07-27/>

### **Japan urges regions to mount COVID fight as variant spreads**

Japan is encouraging regional authorities to take steps to contain a new coronavirus variant that has sent cases to record levels, but there is no plan for sweeping national measures. A seventh wave of COVID-19 pushed the daily tally of new cases in Japan to a record 233,094 on Thursday as the BA.5 variant spreads, putting pressure on medical services and disrupting some company operations. Japan has never imposed national lockdowns on the scale of some other countries and has instead periodically asked people to stay at home as much as possible and limited the opening hours of restaurants and bars.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/japan-free-up-local-officials-battle-new-covid-variant-kyodo-2022-07-29/>

### **Russia daily COVID cases hit highest since April**

Russia reported 11,515 new daily coronavirus cases on Thursday, authorities said, the highest such figure since April 13. Forty-one people in Russia died of coronavirus over the last day, the country's anti-COVID-19 taskforce said in an update. Russia has recorded 18,565,551 cases of COVID since April 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic in the country. Russia said earlier this month it was ending all restrictions to combat the spread of COVID-19, including the requirement to wear masks, citing a steady decline in deaths from the virus

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/russia-daily-covid-cases-hit-highest-since-april-2022-07-28/>

## **New Lockdown**

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### **Shanghai's Baoshan district orders lockdown on some steel warehouses**

A district in China's financial hub of Shanghai has ordered a three-day lockdown of some of its steel warehouses from July 26 after a residential neighborhood in the district was classified as high risk following the detection of a coronavirus case there. Three out of six warehouses in the Baoshan district that Reuters contacted said they were required to enter a "closed-loop" system with no staff or materials allowed in or out of the warehouses. Operations inside the warehouses, however, are

running normally.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghais-baoshan-district-orders-lockdown-some-steel-warehouses-2022-07-27/>