

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Lockdown Exit

Moderna Vaccine to Run Out of Stock in Hungary

Those who want to get a Moderna vaccine against the coronavirus should hurry because the last batches are being used at vaccination centers and GPs, according to the official government coronavirus website, koronavirus.gov.hu. Hungary has received 1.7 million doses of the Moderna vaccine under the EU procurement, of which the last doses are now being used for vaccination.

<https://hungarytoday.hu/moderna-vaccine-to-run-out-of-stock-in-hungary/>

Infectious disease experts warn Omicron wave not the last of Australia's COVID-19 pandemic

Health authorities say Australia may have hit its winter COVID-19 peak earlier than predicted. But they warn the virus has repeatedly mutated and different strains still pose a real risk. On August 10, there were 133 deaths and 27,263 new cases recorded nationwide

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-08-12/covid-pandemic-emma-mcbryde-interview/101320990>

Long Covid Symptoms: Big Drop in Stress Hormone Cortisol Shown in Study

Striking decreases in the stress hormone cortisol were the strongest predictor for who develops long Covid in new research that identified several potential drivers of the lingering symptoms afflicting millions of survivors. Levels of cortisol in the blood of those with the so-called post Covid-19 condition were roughly half those found in healthy, uninfected people or individuals who fully recovered from the pandemic disease, researchers at Yale School of Medicine in Connecticut and the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York found. No one knows yet what causes the constellation of symptoms, often termed long Covid, that afflict some 10% to 20% of people after the acute phase of infection from SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19. The US government is spending more than \$1 billion to learn why it occurs and to devise strategies to treat and prevent the condition.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-11/striking-drop-in-stress-hormone-predicts-long-covid-in-study>

North Korea Claims Victory Over COVID-19 and Blames Seoul for the Outbreak

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has declared victory over COVID-19 and ordered preventive measures eased just three months after acknowledging an outbreak, claiming the country's widely disputed success would be recognized as a global health miracle.

<https://time.com/6205310/north-korea-covid/>

Covid-19 and Politics: Pandemic Deepened Countries' Divisions, Survey Says

The Covid-19 pandemic created deeper social divisions compared to the beginning of the outbreak, exposing weaknesses in political systems, according to findings of a survey conducted in 19 upper- and middle-income countries. Overall, 61% of respondents said their countries became more divided during the pandemic, according to the recent Pew Research Center survey. The perception of increased social friction was highest in the US, where 81% of those surveyed held that view, and two-thirds said the country's pandemic response revealed political frailty.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-11/covid-19-and-politics-pandemic-deepened-countries-divisions-survey-says>

North Korea declares victory over COVID, suggests leader Kim had it

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has declared victory over COVID-19 and his sister indicated that he too caught the virus, while vowing "deadly retaliation" against South Korea, which the North blames for causing the outbreak.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/nkoreas-kim-declares-victory-battle-against-covid-19-kcna-2022-08-10/>

Exit Strategies

More Covid jab venues to open for Hong Kong youngsters; city logs 4,376 cases

About 2,200 children have received Sinovac shots in past week since vaccination extended to those as young as six months. Health experts urge government to purchase BioNTech formula for toddlers to encourage vaccination of youngest residents.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3188497/coronavirus-more-vaccination-venues-b-e-opened>

Final call for AstraZeneca Covid-19 jab, only 8% of supply used

Under 9000 doses of the non-mRNA vaccine have been administered out of the 120,000 doses the country received for domestic use. Last week, health authorities updated their advice for people seeking AstraZeneca vaccines with the doses available until September 4. The remaining unused doses will reach their expiry date the following day, according to a spokesperson for Te Whatu Ora / Health NZ, though doses administered the day prior will remain effective. In a statement, the agency's national immunisation programme operations manager Rachel MacKay said there were efforts to get people who chose AstraZeneca to get up-to-date with their vaccines.

<https://www.1news.co.nz/2022/08/11/final-call-for-astrazeneca-covid-19-jab-only-8-of-supply-used/>

Let's talk about Covid-19 boosters

There's been a lot of talk about Covid-19 booster shots in recent weeks. It makes sense -- with colder months just around the corner in the northern hemisphere, public health authorities across the world are getting ready for a potential spike in coronavirus cases. Getting people at risk of severe disease boosted is a big part of the plan. But guidance on who, when and how depends largely on who you ask. Let's start with the basics: All adults should have had their first booster by now. The data shows clearly that an extra shot of an mRNA vaccine increases protection, including against severe disease. "If you are 18 and older and have not yet had any vaccines beyond your primary vaccination, you should get your booster now," said CNN medical analyst Dr. Leana Wen, an emergency physician and professor of health policy and management at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/10/world/coronavirus-newsletter-intl-08-10-22/index.html>

Mask mandates return in New Delhi as COVID-19 cases rise

The Indian capital reintroduced public mask mandates on Thursday as COVID-19 cases continue to rise across the country. The New Delhi government reinstated a fine of 500 rupees (\$6) for anyone caught not wearing a mask or face covering in public. India's Health Ministry said 16,299 new cases were recorded in the past 24 hours nationwide, with a positivity rate of 4.58%. Nearly 2,150 infections were reported in New Delhi. On Wednesday, New Delhi reported eight deaths due to the coronavirus, the highest in nearly six months. People in most parts of the country began discarding face masks as infections dropped following two devastating earlier waves of COVID-19. New Delhi's top elected official, Arvind Kejriwal, said that COVID-19 cases were on the rise but there was no need to panic because most of the new cases were mild.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/new-delhi-ap-indian-people-covid-b2143031.html>

New Covid vaccines targeted at Omicron may not be ready for autumn boosters

Next-generation Covid vaccines are in doubt for the autumn boosters campaign, as ministers and the NHS wait for regulators to sign off on new jabs targeted at the Omicron variant. Studies suggest

that the new versions of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines may reduce transmission of Covid-19 and prove more effective in preventing hospitalisation. But the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is still considering whether to approve jabs, and some insiders fear it may be too slow for the autumn vaccine rollout.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/health/new-covid-vaccines-omicron-not-ready-autumn-boosters-nhs-winter-wave-1789089>

Delhi to enforce mask mandate again after spurt in COVID cases

New Delhi will enforce a mask mandate again after COVID-19 infections rose in the past fortnight, a government order showed on Thursday, though a similar order in April failed to improve compliance. People caught without masks in public in the Indian capital will have to pay a fine of 500 rupees (\$6), the order dated Aug. 8 and shared with reporters on Thursday, said. Presently, mask-wearing is uncommon even in shopping malls and crowded markets.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/delhi-enforce-mask-mandate-again-after-spurt-covid-cases-2022-08-11/>

All go in health concerns as EU pushes for COVID and monkeypox vaccines and welcomes Digital Decade policy programme

The Commission welcomes the political agreement reached by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU on the 2030 Policy Programme: Path to the Digital Decade. The programme sets up a monitoring and cooperation mechanism to achieve the common objectives and targets for Europe's digital transformation set out in the 2030 Digital Compass. This concerns the area of skills and infrastructure, including connectivity, the digitalisation of businesses and online public services as well as the respect of the EU's Digital rights and principles in achieving the general objectives. A Europe Fit for the Digital Age Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager said: "The Digital Decade is about making digital technology work for people and businesses. It is about enabling everyone to have the skills to participate in the digital society. To be empowered. It is about empowering businesses. It is about the infrastructure that keeps us connected. It is about bringing government services closer to citizens. Europe's digital transformation will give opportunities for everyone."

<https://www.eureporter.co/health/personalised-medicine/european-alliance-for-personalised-medicine-personalised-medicine/2022/08/11/update-all-go-in-health-concerns-as-eu-pushes-for-covid-and-monkeypox-vaccines-and-welcomes-digital-decade-policy-programme/>

Partisan Exits

Thailand's hotel-based COVID-19 isolation facilities to be phased out from September

Beginning September 1st, all hotel-based COVID-19 isolation services will be phased out and private and state hospitals will get direct access to supplies of antiviral medication, as the country is transitioning into a post-pandemic period. Prof. Dr. Udom Kachinthorn, chairman of the national reform committee on public health said today (Thursday) that both private and state hospitals can claim refunds from the government for the drugs prescribed to COVID -19 patients. He said that, as COVID-19 is to be re-classified as an "infectious disease under watch", instead of a "dangerous infectious disease" on October 1st, pharmacies should have access to antiviral drugs as well, pending an announcement to be issued by the Thai Food and Drug Administration (TFDA), adding that drug stores can dispense the medications to patients, but they need a doctor's prescription to prevent misuse.

<https://www.thaipbsworld.com/thailands-hotel-based-covid-19-isolation-facilities-to-be-phased-out-from-september/>

Flush with wins, finally COVID-free, Biden to hit the road ahead of U.S. midterms

President Joe Biden plans to travel across the United States in the coming weeks to tout a series of legislative wins on climate change, gun control and drug pricing in a bid to boost his party's chances in the looming midterm elections, White House officials said on Thursday. His Democrats face an uphill battle to retain their narrow control of the House of Representatives and Senate in the Nov. 8

elections. Biden, whose public approval rating rose this week to its highest since early June, plans to use the recent victories in Congress to rally support for Democratic candidates, White House officials Kate Bedingfield and Anita Dunn wrote in a memo distributed to allies in the party and shared with reporters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-tout-recent-legislative-wins-ahead-us-midterm-vote-2022-08-11/>

Continued Lockdown

Several cities in China add COVID curbs as millions still under lockdown

Several COVID-hit Chinese cities from the country's east to west imposed fresh restrictions and lockdowns on their populations on Thursday to contain flare-ups that are again threatening to disrupt local economies. Reducing people's unnecessary movement for a few days - a softer type of lockdown - as soon as dozens of new cases emerge is a key practice of China's "dynamic COVID-zero" strategy. The aim is to avoid turning efforts to halt an outbreak into the extended nightmares seen in Shanghai and Wuhan

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/several-cities-china-adds-covid-curbs-millions-still-under-lockdown-2022-08-11/>

Scientific Viewpoint

CDC Drops Quarantine Recommendation After Covid-19 Exposure

Federal health officials scaled back guidance for quarantining and testing to screen for Covid-19 in settings including schools, a relaxation of pandemic precautions that reflects higher protection from vaccines, treatments and prior infection. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday said it no longer recommends that people quarantine after being exposed to the virus, as long as they don't feel sick, get tested after five days and wear a high-quality mask around others for 10 days. People should still isolate from others for at least five days if they test positive, the CDC said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/cdc-drops-quarantine-recommendation-following-covid-19-exposure-11660244410>

U.S. CDC no longer recommends students quarantine for COVID-19 exposure

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will no longer recommend quarantines or test-to-stay programs at schools or daycare centers for people exposed to COVID-19, the agency said in updated guidelines on Thursday. The agency also said it was no longer recommending unvaccinated people quarantine after exposure as around 95% of the U.S. population has either been vaccinated, had COVID-19 already, or both.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-cdc-no-longer-recommends-students-quarantine-covid-19-exposure-2022-08-11/>

South Korea's 1st domestic COVID-19 vaccine ready

Hundreds of vials were lined up on the belt of a packaging machine at L House, SK Bioscience's vaccine manufacturing facility in Andong, North Gyeongsang Province on Wednesday afternoon, as the developer of South Korea's first homegrown COVID-19 vaccine SKYCovione is poised to roll out the vaccine's first batch by the end of August. A few researchers, who were covered from head to toe with sterilized gear — protective shoes, clothing and hair caps — oversaw the automatic process while others put finishing touches on the packages. On the surface of the packaged products, which were stacked one by one in a yellow plastic box, it read: "SKYCovione Multi-Inj."

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1645079/south-koreas-1st-domestic-covid-19-vaccine-ready>

Universal vaccine needed to tackle future Covid waves, study suggests

A universal Covid jab is "urgently needed," scientists have warned after a study confirmed prior infection or vaccination offers only limited protection against new variants.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/universal-covid-vaccine-study-b2143034.html>

Moderna CEO says Covid vaccines will evolve like 'an iPhone'

Forget taking two to three Covid shots a year. Moderna hopes to roll out a single-dose annual booster to cover the coronavirus, the flu and another common respiratory virus within the next five years. As Covid-19 continues to mutate, Moderna will need to keep updating the vaccines that turned it into a global household name while trying to make it more convenient for consumers, CEO Stéphane Bancel said in an interview with CNN Business Wednesday. He estimated a timeline of "three to five years" for the new combined product, and likened the development of the life-saving jab to that of a smartphone. "You don't get the amazing camera, amazing everything the first time you get an iPhone, but you get a lot of things," he said. "A lot of us buy a new iPhone every September, and you get new apps and you get refreshed apps. And that's exactly the same idea, which is you'll get Covid and flu and RSV [respiratory syncytial virus] in your single dose."

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/11/business/moderna-covid-vaccines-annual-booster-intl-hnk/index.html>

Does Covid Vaccine Protect Against Omicron? Scientists Seek Pan-Coronavirus Shot

Scientists fear the omicron shots coming this fall won't be much better at keeping people from getting Covid-19 than what's come before. That's pushing drugmakers to start working on next-generation vaccines that don't have to be updated that often, if at all. Testing shows that omicron-specific vaccines under development at Moderna Inc. and the partnership of Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE will be "little or no better" than the currently available boosters, according to John Moore, a professor of microbiology and immunology at Weill Cornell Medical College. "The benefit of switching composition is barely detectable," Moore said.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-10/pfizer-pfe-biontech-bntx-aim-to-preserve-immunity-with-pan-coronavirus-shot>

COVID rebound is surprisingly common — even without Paxlovid

After the game-changing COVID-19 antiviral Paxlovid began to be used in late 2021, researchers noticed a perplexing trend. In some people taking the drug, symptoms and detectable virus vanish, only to mysteriously return days later. After months of grasping at straws, scientists are beginning to make some headway in understanding 'Paxlovid rebound'. Two recent studies suggest that it is surprisingly common for SARS-CoV-2 to return in untreated cases of COVID-19, while hinting that the virus's comeback is fiercer and more common in people who take Paxlovid

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-02121-z>

Ensovibep no better than placebo for hospitalised COVID-19 patients

A trial of a novel designed ankyrin repeat protein, ensovibep, for the treatment of patients hospitalised with COVID-19 proved no better than placebo. Ensovibep treatment for patients hospitalised with COVID-19 was no better than placebo and, in fact, the trial was terminated early because of futility, according to the findings of randomised trial by researchers from the ACTIV-3/TICO group. The early treatment of patients infected with COVID-19 using anti-virals such as molnupiravir reduces the risk of hospitalisation or death in at-risk, unvaccinated adults. However, to date, there are no effective anti-viral agents for those who have been hospitalised due to virus. One new class of treatment is designed ankyrin repeat proteins (DARPs), which represent a novel class of specific binding molecules, that can recognise targets with specificities and affinities that equal or surpass those of antibodies.

<https://hospitalhealthcare.com/covid-19/ensovibep-no-better-than-placebo-for-hospitalised-covid-19-patients/>

COVID-19 infection in pregnant women linked to increased risk of adverse outcomes

COVID-19 infection in pregnant women is associated with increased risk of adverse outcomes compared to women who are not pregnant, according to a review published in JACC: Advances from the American College of Cardiology Cardiovascular Disease in Women Committee. Cardiovascular complications include heart attack, arrhythmias, heart failure and long-haul symptoms that may be

difficult to distinguish from other cardiac complications of pregnancy and require the cardiovascular care team to be vigilant when assessing pregnant women with COVID-19. As COVID-19 cases increased globally, awareness of cardiovascular complications also increased, especially in certain high-risk populations. Heart attacks is estimated in up to 12% of patients.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220811/COVID-19-infection-in-pregnant-women-linked-to-increased-risk-of-adverse-outcomes.aspx>

Key blood clotting protein could be 'warning light' for COVID-19 cases

University of Aberdeen team suggest results indicate that protein PAI-1 could be an early indicator of severe COVID-19. A protein that could be an early indicator of severe COVID-19 has been identified by scientists at the University of Aberdeen. Patients who get seriously ill following a COVID-19 infection frequently show evidence of a severe form of lung disease and in around 30% of patients blood clots are evident. Blood clots arise due to deposits of fibrin within the lung contributing to pneumonia and respiratory distress. These fibrin deposits restrict the amount of oxygen absorbed into the lung.

https://www.pharmatimes.com/news/key_blood_clotting_protein_could_be_warning_light_for_covid-19_cases_1453229

Valneva cuts full-year outlook on lower COVID-19 vaccine sales

French vaccine developer Valneva on Thursday cut its full-year revenue outlook citing lower demand for its anti-COVID shot from European Union member states. The European Commission in July slashed its order for VLA2001 to just 1.25 million doses from a previously targeted 60 million, pointing to European countries being well supplied with other vaccines and a slowdown in vaccination programmes.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/valneva-cuts-full-year-outlook-lower-covid-19-vaccine-sales-2022-08-11/>

Africa CDC hopeful Aspen will get COVID vaccine orders

Africa's top public health body said on Thursday it was hopeful South African pharmaceutical firm Aspen Pharmacare would get orders for its own brand COVID-19 vaccine. Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said last month that it is in detailed discussions with buyers to generate demand for Aspen's COVID-19 vaccine Aspenovax. Just one fifth of adults in Africa are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, but demand has fallen across the continent which already receives donated vaccines from Western countries and has supplies to hand from earlier purchases.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/africa-cdc-hopeful-aspen-will-get-covid-vaccine-orders-2022-08-11/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Singapore reports 7776 new COVID-19 cases

Singapore reported 7,776 new cases of COVID-19 on Thursday, bringing the total tally to 1,781,162. Of the new cases, 537 cases were detected through PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests and 7,239 through ART (antigen rapid test) tests, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Health. Among the PCR cases, 506 were local transmissions and 31 were imported cases. Among the ART cases with mild symptoms and assessed to be of low risk, there were 6,756 local transmissions and 483 imported cases, respectively. A total of 686 cases are currently warded in hospitals, with 22 cases in intensive care units.

<https://english.news.cn/20220811/e090196001264fd8b02d08502fa04a44/c.html>

WHO: COVID-19 deaths fall overall by 9%, infections stable

The number of coronavirus deaths fell by 9% in the last week while new cases remained relatively stable, according to the latest weekly pandemic report released by the World Health Organization Wednesday. The U.N. health agency said there were more than 14,000 COVID-19 deaths in the last week and nearly 7 million new infections. The Western Pacific reported a 30% jump in cases while

Africa reported a 46% drop. Cases also fell by more than 20% in the Americas and the Middle East. The number of new deaths rose by 19% in the Middle East, while dropping by more than 70% in Africa, 15% in Europe and 10% in the Americas.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/who-ap-london-chinese-africa-b2142419.html>

Hospital admissions continue to fall as Covid-19 wave recedes

The rate of Covid-19 admissions to hospitals in England has fallen for the third week in a row, in fresh evidence the current wave of infections is receding. The overall number of patients testing positive for the virus is also continuing to drop and is down 40% from the recent peak. Infection levels rose from the end of May to mid-July, driven by the spread of the BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron subvariants. But data in the last few weeks has suggested the virus is now becoming less prevalent across the country.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/hospital-admissions-continue-to-fall-as-covid-19-wave-recedes-41905683.html>

COVID-19, arguably, has become endemic in India

It is time to deal with COVID-19 just like any other health condition and integrate COVID-19 interventions in general health service. The infectious disease 'outbreaks' or 'epidemics' or 'pandemics' share a fate — there is a day when the majority of them run their course and fade away. However, a small proportion (of epidemics or pandemics) transitions to the stage of endemicity, i.e., a level of transmission which is not considered to be a broad threat.

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/covid-19-arguably-has-become-endemic-in-india/article65755040.ece>

Number of people in Alberta hospitals with COVID-19 increases

The number of people in Alberta hospitals with COVID-19 continues to rise. New numbers released by the Alberta government on Wednesday revealed there were 748 patients in hospitals with COVID-19 on Aug. 8, up from 702 a week earlier. Of those patients, 28 are being treated in intensive-care units.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9052233/alberta-covid-hospital-numbers-august-10/>

Health panel issues warning over COVID-19 in Japan

A health ministry advisory board has issued a warning over the coronavirus situation, saying that new infection cases remain at the highest level. The medical system has been under heavy strain, and the situation could become even more severe, the panel of experts said. The situation needs to be watched with the utmost caution as close contact opportunities are expected to increase amid the summer holiday season, it said. "New infection cases are starting to decrease in some areas, but we cannot be optimistic," National Institute of Infectious Diseases chief Takaji Wakita, who heads the advisory board, told a news conference after the panel's meeting on Wednesday. "We are concerned about future developments in the situation."

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/08/11/national/science-health/covid-panel-warning/>

Covid-19 cases mild but underreported, says Health experts amid rise in infection | Mint

As India is seeing a rise in Covid-19 cases, especially in the national capital, ahead of the festival season, experts feel that the infections are mild but are underreported. According to Dr S Chatterjee, Senior Consultant Internal Medicine at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, it seems as if the coronavirus next wave has already started as a huge number of cases are coming and most of them are underreported. "The number of cases are huge at this moment in the city. I think it has been underreported because quite a few people not even getting themselves tested. The doctors also not advising and the patients are also not getting tested," Dr Chatterjee. He further said that if the testing is increased then the daily number of cases will also increase.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/covid19-cases-mild-but-underreported-says-health-experts-amid-rise-in-infection-11660175026034.html>

Russia's daily coronavirus cases jump to 25815

Russia reported 25,815 new coronavirus cases on Thursday, authorities said, the highest such figure since March 23. Fifty-two people in Russia died of coronavirus over the last day, the country's taskforce against COVID-19 said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-daily-coronavirus-cases-jump-25815-2022-08-11/>

New Lockdown

Macau to suspend ferry services with Shenzhen in China

Ferry services between Macau and the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen will be suspended from Aug. 12, Macau's government said on Thursday, due to measures to curb COVID-19 infections, just days after it had been relaxed. Ferry services had resumed on Aug. 8.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/macau-suspend-ferry-services-with-shenzhen-china-2022-08-11/>