

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 1st Sep 2022

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### Lockdown Exit

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#### **More than 100 officials in Tibet punished over zero-Covid failures**

Tibet had seen only one imported Covid-19 case since 2020 until an outbreak earlier this month. Heads roll also in hard-hit tourist hub Hainan, with provinces keen to show total commitment to zero-Covid ahead of key party congress, analyst notes.

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3190457/coronavirus-china-tibet-punishes-more-100-officials-over-zero>

#### **China places millions in new Covid lockdown after fresh outbreaks**

Millions of Chinese citizens were placed under a new lockdown on Tuesday following a fresh outbreak of coronavirus as the government remains committed to its “zero- Covid ” policy. The tougher curbs on activities have sparked concerns over the health of the barely-growing economy

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/china-places-millions-in-new-covid-lockdown-after-fresh-outbreaks/ar-AA11j0a2>

#### **Americans Could Have to Pay for Covid Shots Starting Next Year**

The US government anticipates that it will stop purchasing and providing Covid-19 shots as soon as January due to a lack of funds, leaving Americans to obtain vaccines through insurers or pay for them out-of-pocket. US health officials convened a meeting of more than 100 representatives from drugmakers, state and local health departments, health providers and insurers on Tuesday to discuss the government’s plans to transition sales of Covid vaccines and therapeutics to the commercial market, according to Dawn O’Connell, who heads the Health and Human Services Department’s Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-30/us-to-transition-covid-shots-to-commercial-sales-next-year?srn=d=premium-uk>

#### **U.S. FDA green lights Omicron-targeted COVID boosters ahead of revaccination campaign**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday authorized updated COVID-19 booster shots from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna that target the dominant BA.4 and BA.5 Omicron subvariants, as the government prepares for a broad fall vaccination campaign that could begin within days. The new vaccines also include the original version of the virus targeted by all the previous COVID shots.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-authorizes-moderna-pfizerbiontech-vaccine-boosters-retooled-omicron-2022-08-31/>

#### **What you need to know about fall booster shots of coronavirus vaccine**

New coronavirus boosters are just around the corner following authorization Wednesday by federal regulators. The updated shots are designed to provide a stronger shield against the BA.4 and BA.5 omicron subvariants still causing tens of thousands of infections and hundreds of deaths every day in the United States. The boosters will be part of a campaign by the federal government, to be kicked off within days, to persuade Americans to bolster their immune defenses before a potential surge in covid-19 cases as cooler weather arrives in the fall.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/08/31/fall-booster-shots-2/>

#### **US clears updated COVID boosters targeting newest variants**

The U.S. on Wednesday authorized its first update to COVID-19 vaccines, booster doses that target

today's most common omicron strain. Shots could begin within days. The move by the Food and Drug Administration tweaks the recipe of shots made by Pfizer and rival Moderna that already have saved millions of lives. The hope is that the modified boosters will blunt yet another winter surge — and help tamp down the BA.5 omicron relative that continues to spread widely. "These updated boosters present us with an opportunity to get ahead" of the next COVID-19 wave, said FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/us-clears-updated-covid-boosters-targeting-newest-variants-89103650>

### **Cyprus ends mandatory mask wearing as COVID-19 measures eased**

Article reports that Cyprus on Wednesday said it would end all restrictions on gatherings and the mandatory use of face masks in most areas after cases of COVID-19 were declining. Effective Wednesday, all restrictions on public or private gatherings would be eased, while wearing face masks would only be compulsory in areas such as hospitals, care homes and on public transport, Health Minister Michalis Hadjipantela said.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/cyprus-ends-mandatory-mask-wearing-covid-19-measures-eased-2022-08-31/>

### **S.Korea to end pre-departure COVID test requirement for overseas travellers**

South Korea will from Saturday no longer require travellers to the country to test for COVID-19 before departure, although they will still need to take a PCR test within 24 hours of arrival. The latest relaxing of rules comes amid an easing in case numbers with daily COVID infections hovering around 100,000 in recent weeks compared with more than 180,000 in mid-August. "The weekly number of infections have declined for the first time in nine weeks and the virus is showing signs of slowing down," Lee Ki-il, the country's second vice health minister, told reporters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-end-pre-departure-covid-test-rule-international-arrivals-2022-08-30/>

## **Exit Strategies**

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### **Covid Vaccines Are Free in the US Now, by Jan 2023 You May Have to Pay**

The US government anticipates that it will stop purchasing and providing Covid-19 shots as soon as January due to a lack of funds, leaving Americans to obtain vaccines through insurers or pay for them out-of-pocket. US health officials convened a meeting of more than 100 representatives from drugmakers, state and local health departments, health providers and insurers on Tuesday to discuss the government's plans to transition sales of Covid vaccines and therapeutics to the commercial market, according to Dawn O'Connell, who heads the Health and Human Services Department's Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-30/us-to-transition-covid-shots-to-commercial-sales-next-year>

*Additional sources: (South China Morning Post) (CBC.ca on MSN.com) (The National) (ABC News)*

### **Goldman Sachs to lift vaccination, Covid-19 requirements in most offices next month**

Goldman Sachs said Tuesday it will lift all its Covid-19 requirements in most offices beginning Sept. 6, in response to new guidance from federal health officials. According to a memo obtained by CNBC, the bank will no longer require its workers to be vaccinated to enter its offices or to test and wear face coverings, except those in Lima and New York City. Unvaccinated employees in New York City will still need an approved religious or medical exemption to enter the bank's office spaces, according to the memo.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/30/goldman-sachs-to-lift-vaccination-covid-19-requirements-in-most-offices-next-month.html>

### **Antigua and Barbuda removes Covid-19 travel restrictions**

Antigua and Barbuda is the latest Caribbean nation to remove all Covid-19-related entry restrictions.

Arriving travellers by air no longer need to provide proof of vaccination or testing. All Covid-related curbs are also lifted for passengers arriving by yacht or ferry. Passengers arriving by cruise ship remain subject to the protocols placed on board by their cruise company, according to updated Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) travel advice.

<https://travelweekly.co.uk/news/air/antigua-and-barbuda-removes-covid-19-travel-restrictions>

### **Autumn Covid-19 booster jabs available in Jersey from September | ITV News**

Islanders in Jersey who are eligible for a Covid-19 booster jab will be able to book another vaccination from tomorrow (Thursday 1 September). The extra dose of the vaccine is intended to protect the most vulnerable islanders during the autumn and winter months. The government's Autumn Booster programme is open to: Care home residents and staff; Health and social workers; All adults over the age of 50; Anyone aged under 50 who is clinically 'at risk', lives in the same home as someone who's immunosuppressed, or is a carer

<https://www.itv.com/news/channel/2022-08-31/autumn-covid-19-booster-jabs-available-in-jersey-from-september>

### **Hungary must act to get EU COVID-19 funds, says Czech minister**

Hungary must take action on changing its rule of law before it can receive any European Union recovery funds, the EU affairs chief of the Czech government, which holds the bloc's rotating presidency, said in an interview on Tuesday. Hungary and Poland both have yet to receive billions of euros of post-COVID EU recovery funds as the governments have not met Brussels' demands on respecting the rule of law.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungary-must-act-get-eu-covid-19-funds-says-czech-minister-2022-08-30/>

### **North Korea's COVID restrictions intensify human rights violations - U.N.**

Hungary must take action on changing its rule of law before it can receive any European Union recovery funds, the EU affairs chief of the Czech government, which holds the bloc's rotating presidency, said in an interview on Tuesday. Hungary and Poland both have yet to receive billions of euros of post-COVID EU recovery funds as the governments have not met Brussels' demands on respecting the rule of law.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/north-koreas-covid-restrictions-intensify-human-rights-violations-un-2022-08-31/>

## **Partisan Exits**

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### **COVID-19 vaccine opponents slapped with \$214,000 in legal costs after failed lawsuit**

In dismissing the case in June, Justice Debra Mortimer said it had many flaws. "Their case is a general attack on the government response across Australia to the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of a vaccination program," she said. "In a likely complex and resource-intensive case such as this, the court must be able to identify the material facts pleaded to support the allegation, or some probative basis in the primary material for the contentions. "Counsel for the applicants did not even attempt to point the court towards one."

<https://7news.com.au/lifestyle/health-wellbeing/covid-19-vaccine-opponents-slapped-with-214000-in-legal-costs-after-failed-lawsuit-c-8065857>

### **Covid-19 inquiry to examine NI Executive's response to pandemic**

Article reports that the UK Covid-19 Inquiry has begun examining the Northern Ireland Executive's decision-making in response to the Covid-19 pandemic between early January 2020 and May 2022. It will examine the decision-making of key groups and individuals within the government in Northern Ireland. This will include the first and deputy first ministers and other ministers. Particular attention will be paid to early January 2020 and the start of the first national lockdown in March. A preliminary hearing will be held in the autumn.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-62736691.amp>

## **China's factory activity extends declines as heat, COVID hit output**

China's factory activity extended declines in August as new COVID infections, the worst heatwaves in decades and an embattled property sector weighed on production, suggesting the economy will struggle to sustain momentum. The official manufacturing purchasing managers' index (PMI) rose to 49.4 in August from 49.0 in July, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said on Wednesday. While the PMI slightly beat expectations for 49.2 in a Reuters poll of analysts, it remained below the 50-point mark that separates contraction from growth for the second straight month, suggesting protracted weakness in the sector.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/chinas-aug-factory-activity-extends-declines-risks-grow-2022-08-31/>

## **Scientific Viewpoint**

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### **Covid-19 Booster Shots Targeting Omicron Authorized, Likely to Be Offered Soon**

U.S. health regulators cleared use of retooled Covid-19 vaccines that target the latest versions of Omicron, in preparation for a fall booster campaign that could start within days. The action by the Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday permits people 12 years and older to receive an additional shot of the vaccine from Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE, and people 18 and older to receive a Moderna Inc. booster at least two months after their most recent dose. The clearance marks the first changes to the composition of the Covid-19 vaccines since their distribution began in the U.S. in December 2020.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-19-booster-shots-targeting-omicron-authorized-likely-to-be-offered-soon-11661953759?mod=flipboard>

### **Omicron Booster Shots Cleared by FDA to Fight Latest Covid Variants**

Covid-19 boosters from Moderna Inc. and the partnership of Pfizer Inc. and BioNTech SE that are tailored to the latest omicron variants got US regulatory clearance, a move toward additional protection as concern grows about potential new waves in the fall and winter. The emergency use authorization is for use of a dose of Moderna's shot in adults 18 and older, while Pfizer's can be used in people 12 and older, the Food and Drug Administration said Tuesday in a statement. The booster must be given at least two months after recipients' latest Covid shot.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-08-31/fda-clears-way-for-boosters-targeted-at-latest-covid-variants>

### **FDA clears updated COVID-19 vaccines ahead of fall booster campaign**

The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday authorized updated COVID-19 booster shots specifically targeting a subvariant of omicron. The move comes ahead of a fall campaign to give Americans additional booster jabs to protect them against variants.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/3622371-fda-clears-updated-covid-19-vaccines-ahead-of-fall-booster-campaign/>

### **FDA authorizes Pfizer and Moderna's updated Covid-19 boosters**

The US Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday authorized updated Covid-19 vaccine booster shots from Moderna and Pfizer. This is the first time updated Covid-19 vaccines have received emergency use authorization in the United States.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/08/31/health/fda-covid-vaccine-updated-booster-authorized/index.html>

### **Study explores differences in the efficiency of COVID-19 vaccine boosters**

In the present study, researchers performed a meta-analysis using currently available data on neutralization titers obtained from clinical studies that compared the booster COVID-19 vaccination with the currently available SARS-CoV-2 ancestral strain- or variant-based vaccines. The team compared the average extent of boosting between vaccines based on the ancestral strain and those modified as per the variant by comparing the increase in neutralization titers noted before and after booster dose administration. Furthermore, the study compared the magnitude of boosting against the homologous strains, wherein the variants used in the vaccine and the neutralization assay are

the same, versus non-homologous strains, wherein the variants used in the vaccine and the neutralization assay are different.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220830/Study-explores-differences-in-the-efficiency-of-COVID-19-vaccine-boosters.aspx>

### **There's some good news in the battle against long Covid**

There is also some indication we may be getting closer to more precisely defining and treating long Covid. Many studies around the world have been set up to recruit groups with long Covid to compare them with "rapid recovery" cases – people who recovered quickly and fully from Covid – to try to find differences in levels of antibodies, hormones, immune cells or other things that can be measured with a blood test. These so-called "defining biomarkers" can be gamechangers. They can help health services define and refer cases, provide more extensive evidence for employers and tribunals, and also point towards identification of therapies and treatments. One of the first such studies was reported this month in a preprint from Akiko Iwasaki, David Putrino and colleagues at Yale. They report a clear biomarker delineating differences in the long Covid group, with signals including low serum cortisol (a hormone involved in control of the stress response) and evidence of reactivation of latent Epstein-Barr virus.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/aug/31/good-news-long-covid-uk-cases-scientists>

### **Scientists Boost Immune Response to COVID-19 Vaccine by 25 Times**

Ironically, some vaccines need their own "boosters." An ingredient called an adjuvant can be added to vaccines to help elicit a more robust immune response, better training the body to fight a pathogen. Scientists report a substance that boosted the immune response to an experimental COVID-19 shot in mice by 25 times, compared to injection with the vaccine alone. Details of the research are described in a new paper published today (August 31, 2022) in the journal ACS Infectious Diseases.

<https://scitechdaily.com/scientists-boost-immune-response-to-covid-19-vaccine-by-25-times/>

### **Moderna sues Pfizer and BioNTech over COVID-19 vaccine**

One patent in question has to do with a modification to the mRNA delivered in the vaccine. A big hurdle in creating mRNA medicines was that the immune system would destroy the mRNA before it could act, Moderna describes in the complaint. The structure of 1-Methylpseudouridine. Four different units, called nucleosides, make up mRNA. Moderna says it discovered that swapping out one of them, uridine, with 1-methylpseudouridine resulted in better protein production than previous modification attempts and diminished the problematic immune response. Moderna says it patented this research and that Pfizer and BioNTech used the same modification.

[https://cen.acs.org/policy/intellectual-property/Moderna-sues-Pfizer-BioNTech-over/100/web/2022/08?utm\\_source=LatestNews&utm\\_medium=LatestNews&utm\\_campaign=CENRSS](https://cen.acs.org/policy/intellectual-property/Moderna-sues-Pfizer-BioNTech-over/100/web/2022/08?utm_source=LatestNews&utm_medium=LatestNews&utm_campaign=CENRSS)

### **Greater regular physical activity reduces risk of adverse COVID-19 outcomes**

Greater regular physical activity reduces the risk of infection, hospitalisation, severe illness and death from COVID-19 in comparison to those who are inactive according to the findings of a systematic review and meta-analysis by a team of Spanish researchers. Some degree of physical activity is better than none but greater regular physical activity is best for optimal health outcomes according to a World Health Organisation guideline from 2020. Physical activity has a beneficial impact on the immune system and also appears to have protective associations against infectious disease mortality. Moreover, it also appears that the converse is true, particular in relation to COVID-19. For example, in a study of over 48,440 adult patients with a COVID-19, those who were physically inactive had a higher risk of hospitalisation, admission to intensive care and death compared to those who were consistently meeting physical activity guidelines.

<https://hospitalhealthcare.com/covid-19/greater-regular-physical-activity-reduces-risk-of-adverse-covid-19-outcomes/>

### **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare gets \$2M for COVID-19 linked data project**

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare is receiving A\$2.9 million (\$2 million) from the federal government for its COVID-19 linked data project. The agency is one of the 14 research groups being funded a total of A\$31.5 million (\$22 million) by the government's Medical Research Future Fund to help improve Australia's understanding of COVID-19.

<https://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/anz/australian-institute-health-and-welfare-gets-2m-covid-19-linked-data-project>

### **Vitamin D mediates crosstalk between COVID-19 and osteoporosis**

The global outbreak of the highly infectious severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) resulted in the pandemic of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which has claimed over 6.4 million lives worldwide to date. Several types of COVID-19 vaccines have been developed, many of which have received approval from global regulatory bodies. However, genomic mutations have led to the emergence of new SARS-CoV-2 variants, which have reduced the effectiveness of these vaccines.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220830/Vitamin-D-mediates-crosstalk-between-COVID-19-and-osteoporosis.aspx>

### **SaNOTize bags \$24M to fund phase 3 trial of COVID-19 nasal spray**

SaNOTize has raised a \$24 million series B round, giving it the cash to fund its ongoing phase 3 COVID-19 prevention trial and other research into its nitric oxide nasal spray (NONS). The Vancouver-based company set up shop in 2017 to unlock the antimicrobial properties of nitric oxide. Using its nitric oxide releasing solution platform, SaNOTize sought to enable the use of the molecule in sprays, baths, lavages, gels and creams. Interest in the platform went up a gear in 2020 when COVID-19 created a pressing need for interventions capable of treating and preventing SARS-CoV-2 infection. While drugs and vaccines have blunted the impact of COVID-19, SaNOTize sees a continued need for new tools for managing the coronavirus—and has persuaded investors to bankroll its pursuit of the perceived opportunity. Horizons Ventures and OurCrowd co-led the series B round.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/sanotize-bags-24m-fund-phase-3-trial-covid-19-nasal-spray>

### **CDC advisers to decide on Omicron-retooled boosters on Sept 1**

Advisers to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will meet on Thursday to vote on whether to recommend the use of two COVID-19 vaccine boosters tailored against the Omicron variant. A recommendation in favor of the modified vaccines by Pfizer Inc and its German partner BioNTech SE, as well as Moderna Inc is expected to pave the way for a rollout next week.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/cdc-advisers-decide-omicron-retooled-boosters-sept-1-2022-08-30/>

### **U.S. life expectancy fell further in 2021 due to COVID**

Life expectancy fell in the United States in 2021 to its lowest since 1996, the second year of a historic retreat due to COVID-19 deaths, provisional government data showed on Wednesday. The nearly one-year decline from 2020 to 76.1 years marked the largest two-year drop in life expectancy at birth in close to a century, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found. Disparity in life expectancy between men and women also widened last year to the highest in more than two decades, with men now expected to live 73.2 years, nearly six fewer years than women.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/covid-drives-down-us-life-expectancy-second-straight-year-cdc-data-2022-08-31/>

### **Melbourne launches multimillion-dollar centre for pandemic treatments**

Melbourne will bid to become a global centre for the development of new antiviral therapies to deal with future pandemics after receiving the largest donation in Australian medical history. Geoff Cumming, a Canadian who lives in the city, has pledged at least A\$250mn (\$172mn) towards

creating The Cumming Global Centre for Pandemic Therapeutics based in Parkville, adjacent to the University of Melbourne.

<https://www.ft.com/content/dac280d2-8ce7-4fbf-b296-7bfd8c5b1916>

## **Coronavirus Resurgence**

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### **'Elderly residents make up four-fifths' of Hong Kong's hospitalised Covid cases**

Hospital Authority Chief Manager Dr Lau Ka-hin says 2,100 of the coronavirus patients sent to public facilities were aged 60 and above. But former authority chief executive calls for clearer guidelines on types of chronic illnesses that require patient observation to help ease demand for hospital beds

<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/society/article/3190751/elderly-residents-make-four-fifths-hong-kongs-hospitalised?module=live&pgtype=homepage>