

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

18th Nov 2020

Isolation Tips

Learning the lessons of Covid-19

Each country is trying to find a route through winter which will disrupt life as little as possible while still safeguarding health. There's also a wish, as the UK's Prime Minister put it, to "save Christmas". And each country has a slightly different approach. Here in Switzerland the government has opted for a "slowdown" rather than a lockdown. Neighbouring France has gone into another "confinement" with strict rules around movement. To our east, Austria is beginning a "hard lockdown", with schools closed and a daytime as well as a nighttime curfew. There is increasing debate, and confusion, about which measures are most successful. In most parts of Switzerland we can still go out for dinner. Our friends in France cannot. But since the introduction of the Swiss slowdown and the French confinement, cases of Covid-19 in both countries have begun to fall

<https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/learning-the-lessons-of-covid-19/46165130>

Lockdown has not led to more Queensland suicides, research finds

Queensland's suicide rate did not change during lockdowns, however the pandemic contributed to a handful of people taking their own lives, research has found. The stress of pandemic lockdowns forced many people to face mental health issues for the first time, or exacerbated existing conditions.

<https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/lockdown-has-not-led-to-more-queensland-suicides-research-finds-20201117-p56fgf.html>

Hygiene Helpers

Wash hands, use the app and avoid a Christmas lockdown

As 2020's finishing post shuffles into view, a casual query among friends about what they fear the most in the lead up to Christmas elicits a unanimous, reflexive response. Lockdown. A regional or nationwide Level 3 or 4 plunge, right on the holiday doorstep, knocking the stuffing out of your Christmas turkey. Hopefully, the spectre of such bad tidings won't play out, but it's clear that we still have many months of maintaining our heightened defensive posture in repelling the menace of this pandemic from taking root in the community.

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/christmas/300159515/wash-hands-use-the-app-and-avoid-a-christmas-lockdown>

American, British Airways, OneWorld to trial COVID-19 tests

American Airlines, British Airways, and the oneworld alliance will launch a coronavirus testing trial this month aimed at convincing the U.S. and UK governments to introduce testing so that transatlantic travel can restart. BA was operating 84 flights per week between London Heathrow and New York JFK prior to the pandemic, but last week operated just 21. BA CEO Sean Doyle said that without a travel testing regime, Britain was being left behind countries such as Germany. Alongside its partners, BA plans to collect data from at least 500 passengers on flights from three U.S. cities to London Heathrow by asking them to take three free COVID-19 tests as part of their journey: one before departure, one on landing, and one three days after their arrival.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-british-airways-idUSKBN27X2OS?taid=5fb42f4849698f00019c40b8&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

NIH head: Masks are 'lifesaving medical instrument' not 'invasion of your personal

freedom'

The head of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is urging the public to abide by safety guidelines and socially distance, saying that while recent results for COVID-19 vaccine candidates are "encouraging," people must take extra precautions for at least "a few more months." The comments from NIH director Francis Collins come as pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna recently announced that their vaccine candidates were shown to be more than 90 percent effective at preventing the coronavirus. Collins told Judy Woodruff on PBS NewsHour on Monday that he felt "extremely encouraged" by the results and said "we're pretty optimistic that we're on a good path."

<https://thehill.com/homenews/news/526388-head-of-nih-masks-are-lifesaving-medical-instrument-not-invasion-of-you>
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Mouthwash can kill COVID-19 in 30 seconds: Study

Over-the-counter mouthwash can kill coronavirus within 30 seconds of exposure, a study has found. Scientists at Cardiff University discovered mouthwash containing at least 0.07 percent cetylpyridinium chloride (CPC) showed "promising signs" of reducing transmission of the virus. Their preliminary report, which is yet to be peer-reviewed, supports a study published last week that found mouthwash containing CPC helps in reducing the viral load of people infected with the coronavirus. It comes ahead of a clinical trial on patients at the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff to find out whether mouthwash can reduce coronavirus in a patient's saliva. The findings are expected to be published in early 2021. Dentyl is the only UK mouthwash brand that is part of the clinical trial led by Professor David Thomas from Cardiff University.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/17/coronavirus-30-seconds>

Community Activities

Educators work with industry leaders to make remote learning more hands-on

Students have powered on as best they can during the pandemic. Handling remote learning and adjusted teaching methods. Now, some schools are partnering with local industry leaders to help make some classes more hands-on, even while taking classes from home. "We have several auto-shop classes. Auto shop is completely hands-on, right? Kids need to be in the grease, they need to be on the tools. And so, it's been very difficult. So we've actually had some teachers that actually put together tool kits and checked them out to students where they can tinker with things at home," said Dr. Jamon Peariso, the Director of College and Career Readiness at Visalia Unified School District.

<https://www.wxyz.com/news/national/coronavirus/educators-work-with-industry-leaders-to-make-remote-learning-more-hands-on>

Insurers are trying to escape COVID-19 liability, watchdog tells UK Supreme Court

Insurers are trying to escape liability for pandemic-related business losses with counter-intuitive arguments that go against the essential purpose of insurance, Britain's markets watchdog told the UK Supreme Court on Tuesday. A lawyer for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which brought a test case against insurers on behalf of policyholders, said insurers had reached an "extraordinary conclusion" that business losses were largely uncovered during the coronavirus pandemic because of the widespread havoc it has caused. "(Insurers) are saying: 'We insure perils but not ones that are going to cost us a huge amount of money. We never contemplated that'. Well, that isn't an answer," Colin Edelman, the FCA's lawyer, told the second day of a four-day appeal, watched by thousands of businesses brought to their knees during the pandemic.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-insurers-court/insurers-are-trying-to-escape-covid-19-liability-watchdog-tells-uk-supreme-court-idUKKBN27X2LM>

Watchdog criticises UK government for COVID procurement amid 'chumocracy' claims

The British government did not properly document key decisions nor was it open enough about

billions of pounds of contracts handed out during the COVID-19 pandemic, its spending watchdog has said, as critics accuse ministers of running a “chumocracy”. The National Audit Office (NAO) said on Wednesday there had been a lack of transparency and a failure to explain why certain suppliers were chosen, or how any conflict of interest was dealt with, over 18 billion pounds in procurement deals made between March and the end of July, often with no competition. The report comes amid growing criticism some multi-million pound contracts were awarded during the coronavirus crisis to companies with links to ministers, lawmakers and officials. “While we recognise that these were exceptional circumstances, it remains essential that decisions are properly documented and made transparent if government is to maintain public trust that taxpayers’ money is being spent appropriately and fairly,” NAO head Gareth Davies said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-britain-procurement/watchdog-criticises-uk-government-for-covid-procurement-amid-chumocracy-claims-idUKKBN27Y00D>

Working Remotely

Tech jobs spring up as companies adapt to new world of work

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the world of work as we know it. Reducing human contact has led to the mass adoption of working from home and accelerated companies’ reliance on digital technology and the telecoms networks that underpin it. Meanwhile, thousands of workers have been forced to move to new industries as the pandemic threatens the future of their chosen sector, and the trauma of a global pandemic and recession has highlighted the need for mental health support at work. So what jobs are likely to be in demand in the economy of the future? The FT asked experts and companies around the world for five real life examples:

<https://www.ft.com/content/0aee9ffd-3ea2-4eeb-a45d-0f60cabab396>

The worst work model of the future? It's not all office, or fully remote

A Harvard Business School professor who has studied remote work for years says companies risk making big mistakes in a rushed move to new employment models after Covid. He referenced GitLab, a 1,300-employee company that has been fully remote since it was founded and built rigorous processes from Day One to make it work. GitLab’s CEO says hybrid work models, which many companies now say they will favor in the future, can turn out to be “horrible.”

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/11/17/worst-work-model-of-the-future-its-not-all-office-or-fully-remote.html>

Australians are doing \$100 billion worth of unpaid overtime, as remote working comes at a cost

Australians are working more than five hours of unpaid overtime every week, according to new research from the Centre for Future Work. Australians are working more than five hours of unpaid work every week, according to new research that put the annual figure of unpaid work at nearly \$100 billion. For many, the reality of working from home this year has actually meant living at work, with 70 per cent of those ‘working from home’ pulling more hours than they would in the office. The Centre for Future Work’s 12th annual Go Home on Time Day report shows Australians did \$98.6 billion worth of unpaid overtime. In total, that’s the equivalent of seven weeks of full-time work per person.

<https://www.smartcompany.com.au/people-human-resources/remote-work/unpaid-overtime-working-from-home/>

Proposals to boost employment rights for remote workers

The Labour Party has proposed new legislation to boost employment protection for the almost 800,000 people who are doing some or all of their work from home, including a “right to disconnect” from out-of-hours communications. Speaking ahead of the launch of the Working from Home (Covid-19) Bill 2020, which will be debated in the Dáil tomorrow, the party’s employment affairs spokesperson Senator Marie Sherlock raised concerns about the impact of working from home on workers. She acknowledged that remote working had been a positive experience for many workers,

but cited a Labour survey of 305 respondents, one third of whom reported negative effects on their mental health as one of the main drawbacks.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/politics/2020/1117/1178795-remote-working/>

Virtual Classrooms

WVa education group seeks virtual learning until year's end

West Virginia's largest teacher organization called on the governor Monday to take public schools online-only through year's end because of the coronavirus pandemic. The plea comes after the state recorded a high of 4,404 confirmed virus cases over the past week from Nov. 9 through Sunday, a 63% increase from the previous week. The state health department reported 632 new cases and three more deaths on Monday, bringing West Virginia's total confirmed cases to more than 30,000 and the death toll to at least 562.

<https://apnews.com/article/west-virginia-coronavirus-pandemic-e8b33166d9c0cf5a4589616a8ce3cd70>

International Students Confront Challenges Of Virtual Learning | Boston

When the University suspended in-person classes in March, Jiayi Wang, MCAS '22, returned home to Henan, China to finish out the semester in a different hemisphere, and because of U.S. travel restrictions barring entry to those coming from China, she was unable to return to campus for the fall semester. Roughly half of BC's 1,872 international students are attending classes from their home countries this semester, according to Adrienne Nussbaum, director of the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS). But students hailing from China have been among the most affected by travel restrictions, she said.

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/boston/international-students-confront-challenges-virtual-learning>

Students Must Adjust As Universities, Colleges Pivot Back To Virtual Learning Due To Surging COVID-19 Cases

Many of the colleges and universities in Maryland are pivoting back to virtual learning, ramping up testing or sending students home until the surge in COVID-19 cases is under control. Gov. Larry Hogan gave college students a warning as the holiday season approaches, to get tested especially if you have been living away from your family. "If you're a college student planning on returning home, get a test," he said. "If you are planning to spend any time around your grandparents, get a test. If you are returning from any out-of-state travel, get a test."

<https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2020/11/17/students-must-adjust-as-universities-colleges-pivot-back-to-virtual-learning-due-to-surging-covid-19-cases/>

Teachers say Scots school closures should be on the cards as Level 4 lockdown is imposed in 11 council areas

School closures should be on the cards in the 11 local authority areas - including Glasgow - that face Scotland's toughest Covid restrictions on Friday. The level four rules will see the closure of non-essential shops, pubs, restaurants and gyms. They will be imposed in East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18878099.teachers-say-scots-school-closures-cards-level-4-lockdown-imposed-11-council-areas/>

Building parent-teacher relationships is hard. Remote learning makes it harder.

Several years ago, I sat in a parent-teacher conference and observed a teacher speak to a student from a place of compassion and concern. Once the teacher finished, the parent turned to the child and reiterated the same sentiments. I thought to myself, that is the power of a stable parent-teacher relationship. It was a joy to see and feel no need to intervene. I've also been thinking about the beginning of last school year, when my wife and I took our children to school on their first day. The opportunity to meet their teachers face to face brought a sense of relief that my children were in

good hands. As an educator, every year I see parents' eyes fill with tears of joy on that day.

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2020/11/17/21564443/parent-teacher-relationships-remote-learning>

Connecting with students in online classes: It's all about camera angle

College students, especially recently, are wondering: Will I actually be able to form a connection with my professor if my classes are online? ODU Online's assistant vice president for technology, Miguel Ramlatchan, conducted a study to find out. In a recent article, "Enhancing Instructor Credibility and Immediacy in the Design of Distance Learning Systems and Virtual Classroom Environments," which appeared in the Journal of Applied Instructional Design, Ramlatchan detailed what he and his co-writer discovered.

<https://wydaily.com/local-news/2020/11/17/connecting-with-students-in-online-classes-its-all-about-camera-angle/>

Bots Grade Your Kids' Schoolwork—and They're Often Wrong

Some parents might be in for an unpleasant surprise when report cards come out this fall: lower-than-expected grades. But that might be less an accurate reflection of their children's work than a glitch in the automated systems many schools are using to check schoolwork. Unless parents and teachers review students' tests, the problem can be easy to miss. I discovered the problem only when my fifth-grader bombed a science test for which I knew he was prepared.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-the-bot-that-grades-your-kids-schoolwork-earns-an-f-11605618000>

Teacher mentoring still adds PD value in remote learning

When schools shut down in March due to the coronavirus pandemic, South Dakota's statewide teacher mentoring program shifted to virtual platforms like Zoom and Google Classroom so participants could continue to benefit from the insight of their peers — both for virtual instruction and mentoring, Waubay School District Superintendent Alan Neville and school improvement specialist Janeen Outka write for Edutopia. Participants observed new teachers as they taught live remote lessons by either adding mentors as students or including mentors as co-teachers. Mentors were also able to collaborate on lessons with new teachers and share strategies, tech tools, resources and feedback online.

<https://www.educationdive.com/news/teacher-mentoring-still-adds-pd-value-in-remote-learning/589075/>

Medical schools increasingly turn to virtual reality amid COVID-19 pandemic

Amid enhanced safety precautions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, medical schools across the country are relying more on virtual reality to help train future doctors and health care workers. Multiple monitors in large classroom spaces at Kansas City University allow for social distancing, but students also are required to wear masks and time spent on campus is limited. Most lectures have moved online. Access to in-hospital clinics often is limited as well because of COVID-19, which has led to an increasing reliance on virtual reality to teach future front-line health workers.

<https://www.kshb.com/news/coronavirus/medical-schools-increasingly-turn-to-virtual-reality-amid-covid-19-pandemic>

Public Policies

Covid: States clamp down as US cases pass 11 million mark

Michigan, Washington and California are the latest US states to bring in strict measures to try to curb the spread of Covid-19, as cases top 11 million. High schools and colleges are to halt on-site teaching while restaurants are prohibited from offering indoor dining in Michigan from Wednesday. Indoor restaurant dining is also banned in Washington State, and gyms, cinemas, theatres and museums will close. And much of California will return to its most severe restriction level. On average, more than 1,000 people a day are dying with the virus, and the overall death toll is close to 250,000. Hospital admissions have also reached record levels with nearly 150,000 new cases across the US on Monday.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-54955093>

Lockdown U-turn in Sweden as COVID-19 cases soar and herd immunity hopes falter

Sweden, whose unorthodox pandemic strategy garnered global attention, has registered 15,084 new coronavirus cases since Friday, Health Agency statistics showed on Tuesday. The number comes after Sweden hit a new daily record of 5,990 new cases last Friday, with the number of people testing positive rising by about 50 per cent a week.

<https://nationalpost.com/news/world/lockdown-u-turn-in-sweden-as-covid-19-cases-soar-and-herd-immunity-hopes-falter>

Spain reports 38,273 new coronavirus cases and adds 484 victims since Friday

The coronavirus data sent by Spain's regions to the central Health Ministry showed a clear improvement on Monday, according to the daily report that is published each weekday. Compared with the data released on Friday, all Spanish territories apart from Asturias and Cantabria have registered a fall in the 14-day cumulative number of coronavirus cases per 100,000 inhabitants, one of the key indicators being used to track the progress of the epidemic.

<https://english.elpais.com/society/2020-11-17/spain-reports-38273-new-coronavirus-cases-and-adds-484-victims-since-friday.html>

Europe's second wave shows signs of slowing after new lockdowns

New lockdowns and tough social restrictions were reintroduced across numerous European countries in October in an effort to contain the second wave. The latest numbers suggest these steps seem to be working. Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Monday that the restrictions were causing case numbers to stabilize "somewhat, but too slowly."

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/17/covid-19-infections-in-europe-appear-to-slow-down-after-new-lockdowns.html>

France regaining control over coronavirus but caution still needed: minister

France's health minister Olivier Veran said on Tuesday the country was regaining control over the coronavirus but was not ready to ease the second national lockdown imposed to rein in the disease. After curfew measures applied in major French cities in mid-October failed to produce the results the government had hoped for, it enforced a one-month lockdown on Oct. 30, though it was less strict than the one that ran from March 17 to May 11. "If we let up our efforts too early, if we are less compliant with the lockdown, we might be subject to a new epidemic surge that would undo all the hard work done by the French people for several weeks," Veran told BFM TV.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-france/france-regaining-control-over-coronavirus-but-caution-still-needed-minister-idUKKBN27X0MX>

Austria returns to lockdown to limit rise in Covid-19 cases

Austria will introduce a national lockdown on Tuesday in a bid to bring its soaring coronavirus infections under control, Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said on Saturday, confirming an earlier Reuters report based on a draft government decree.

<https://www.france24.com/en/video/20201117-austria-returns-to-lockdown-to-limit-rise-in-covid-19-cases>

Australia scrambles to contain new COVID-19 cluster

Australian authorities conducted mass tests on Tuesday and about 4,000 people were confined to quarantine in the hope of stifling a new cluster of cases of the novel coronavirus after hopes it had been largely eradicated. The state of South Australia reimposed social distancing restrictions on Monday after detecting 21 cases of the coronavirus, most of which were acquired locally. The cases were the first local transmissions of the virus in Australia in nine days. South Australia Premier Steven Marshall said testing had identified five new cases in the past 24 hours, while 14 people were suspected to be infected and were awaiting test results.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-australia/australia-scrambles-to-contain-new-covid-19-cluster-idUKKBN27W32E>

The government must admit its errors and reset the strategy - it is time to go for 'Zero Covid'

'Zero Covid', which seeks to lock down cases rather than whole countries, has been used across East Asian and Pacific nations and has – to a large degree – succeeded in eliminating the virus

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/zero-covid-lockdown-east-asia-pacific-b1724229.html>

Canada's remote Nunavut to impose COVID-19 lockdown after community outbreak

Canada's remote Arctic territory of Nunavut is suffering its first community outbreak of COVID-19 and will close all non-essential services, as well as schools, for at least two weeks, officials said on Monday. "This is an outbreak," Michael Patterson, Nunavut's chief public health officer, told a news conference streamed online from the territory's capital, Iqaluit. "There has been community transmission occurring in Arviat in the last little while." COVID-19 outbreaks in Canada's northern territories are particularly concerning because healthcare services are limited and because there are often numerous people living under the same roof, which facilitates the spread of the virus.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-canada-nunavut-idUSKBN27W2RT>

Dutch PM to keep coronavirus lockdown measures as cases ease

Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte on Tuesday said most of the country's current coronavirus lockdown measures must remain in place through mid-December, despite a recent decline in the number of new cases. "It's nice what we've achieved together," Rutte said at a press conference after health officials reported that new cases had declined 15 percent in the past week. "But if you look around in Europe, the picture is pretty sombre", he said, with most countries strengthening rather than loosening measures. Earlier on Tuesday the National Institute for Health (RIVM) said in its weekly update there were 37,706 new cases in the week to Nov. 17, the smallest number since early October.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-netherlands/dutch-pm-to-keep-coronavirus-lockdown-measures-as-cases-ease-idUSKBN27X1SL>

Questions arise over dramatic increase in PPE costs paid by government during pandemic

This programme has seen exclusive evidence of the dramatic increase in the price of PPE being paid by the government when the pandemic crisis first hit in April and May.

<https://www.channel4.com/news/questions-arise-over-dramatic-increase-in-ppe-costs-paid-by-government-during-pandemic>

Tokyo to raise coronavirus alert level to highest of four levels: Nikkei

Tokyo is preparing to raise its coronavirus alert level to the highest of four levels as the number of positive cases in the Japanese capital creeps up, the Nikkei business daily reported on Wednesday. As part of the move, the metropolitan government is considering asking some businesses to shorten their hours again, the paper said, citing multiple unnamed sources. The announcement will be made on Thursday, the Nikkei said. Tokyo authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-japan/tokyo-to-raise-coronavirus-alert-level-to-highest-of-4-levels-nikkei-idUKKBN27X33W>

Facing a 'crisis', South Korea moves to tighten COVID-19 curbs

South Korea will tighten physical distancing rules for Seoul and its surrounding areas from Thursday, the government saying its anti-coronavirus efforts are "facing a crisis" as it works to contain increases in new cases in and around the capital. The tougher measures – including limits on public gatherings of 100 or more people as well as the numbers able to attend religious services and sporting events – will come into force on Thursday, Yonhap news agency reported.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/17/facing-a-crisis-south-korea-moves-to-tighten-covid-19-curbs>

People living in Scotland's toughest tiers could be arrested if they try to leave: Nicola Sturgeon makes it illegal to travel outside of Level 3 and 4 lockdown areas

In Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon today announced parts of Scotland that are home to millions of people will be moved into its toughest coronavirus level at the end of the week as she warned infection rates remain 'stubbornly high'. The First Minister said 11 council areas, which include the city of Glasgow, will be subject to Level Four restrictions from 6pm on Friday. The areas have a combined population of approximately 2.3million people. People living in Level Four areas are banned from meeting with other households indoors while all non-essential shops must close.

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8958053/Nicola-Sturgeon-announces-11-council-areas-moving-level-four.html?ito=social-twitter_dailymailUK

Maintaining Services

The Infection Of Hundreds Of Thousands Of Healthcare Workers Worldwide Poses A Threat To National Health Systems

A study recently published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases from thirty-seven countries found that nearly 300,000 healthcare workers had been infected with Covid-19. In addition to the high number of infections, over 2,500 healthcare workers died from the virus as of August 15th.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamhaseltine/2020/11/17/the-infection-of-hundreds-of-thousands-of-healthcare-workers-worldwide-poses-a-threat-to-national-health-systems/>

Lockdowns, Round 2: A New Virus Surge Prompts Restrictions, and Pushback

California and Michigan moved to shut down indoor dining, and Philadelphia severely limited indoor gatherings. With more than 150,000 virus cases daily, the nation is shutting down again.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/16/us/coronavirus-lockdowns-restrictions.html>

Teachers say Scots school closures should be on the cards as Level 4 lockdown is imposed in 11 council areas

School closures should be on the cards in the 11 local authority areas - including Glasgow - that face Scotland's toughest Covid restrictions on Friday. The level four rules will see the closure of non-essential shops, pubs, restaurants and gyms. Now the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), the country's largest teaching union, has said schools in Level Four should be allowed to implement blended or remote learning contingency measures

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18878099.teachers-say-scots-school-closures-cards-level-4-lockdown-imposed-11-council-areas/>

Will Christmas be in lockdown? What Covid restrictions might look like in the UK, according to experts

As the current end date for England's second national lockdown approaches, people's minds will be on what type of Christmas they will enjoy. Announcing the strict measures, lasting from 5 November to 2 December, Boris Johnson told the nation: "Christmas is going to be different this year, very different, but it is my sincere hope and belief that by taking tough action now, we can allow families across the country to be together."

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/christmas-2020-lockdown-covid-restrictions-over-holidays-uk-rules-761067?ITO=msn>

German officials ban anti-lockdown protest near parliament

German officials have cited security concerns in their decision to ban a series of protests planned Wednesday outside the federal parliament by people opposed to coronavirus lockdown measures. The unusual move comes amid fears that extremist groups could try to use a rally initially planned for Wednesday to attack the Bundestag, echoing an unsuccessful attempt to storm the parliament building during a similar demonstration in August. The Interior Ministry said Tuesday it had rejected

12 requests to hold rallies within a specially designated zone around parliament. Unlike elsewhere in Germany, protesters have to seek permission to stage demonstrations within the security perimeter surrounding certain federal buildings.

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-berlin-germany-coronavirus-pandemic-cb2042b3cc979862d5bd9b8c3560f82a>

Italy's Covid Lockdown Empties Tourist Hotspots, Again

Italy's spring lockdown, one of the longest and strictest in Europe, gifted extraordinary experiences and photos of the country's iconic tourist attractions devoid of people. As Italy's latest COVID rules see regional borders closing and international travel continues to be restricted, these tourist hotspots are once more emptying. The situation is bittersweet. Many businesses, particularly those dependent on tourism, wonder if they'll manage to survive a second travel hiatus.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebeccahughes/2020/11/17/italys-covid-lockdown-empties-tourist-hotspots-again/>

Spanish cops raid Instagram influencers' anti-lockdown party at Marbella villa and evict 40 people

Cops called amid reports youngsters were flouting national covid restrictions Video shows mask-free influencers jumping into pool from roof of Marbella villa Spain's state of emergency limits public and private gatherings to six people

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8956863/Spanish-cops-raid-Instagram-influencers-anti-lockdown-party-Marbella-villa-evict-40-people.html>

China clamps down on frozen food over coronavirus fears

China is zeroing in on cold chain goods to prevent any outbreaks of Covid-19 after packaging of frozen Argentine beef, German pork and Indian cuttlefish tested positive for the virus. Cities across China, the world's largest importer of beef and pork, have pledged to strengthen screening and sterilisation of imports. The latest campaign to safeguard China's borders against any reintroduction of Covid-19 began after officials in the north-eastern city of Tianjin, one of the country's largest ports, tied an infection of a worker in a warehouse to frozen pork imports from Germany last week. In the following days, food packaging tested positive for coronavirus in cities ranging from eastern Jining to southern Xiamen and central Zhengzhou.

<https://www.ft.com/content/4efc158c-7482-4141-aa20-183a7de7fd59>

Sask. nurses' union head pitches short-term 'circuit break' lockdown to help turn back tide of new COVID-19 cases

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses president Tracy Zambory joined CTV News at Five anchor Jeremy Dodge to explain why she thinks the province's new COVID-19 rules don't go far enough and how a novel approach taken in Australia could help stop the spread of coronavirus in Saskatchewan. This interview has been edited for length and clarity. So last week, you spoke to us here at CTV News about some of your concerns. And they proved not to be unfounded with, you know, over 400 cases of COVID-19 being confirmed on the weekend. Of course, the impact on the healthcare system has been felt by nurses and everybody on the front lines. Now, the government has taken some action, with new restrictions, what are your thoughts on where we stand?

<https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/sask-nurses-union-head-pitches-short-term-circuit-break-lockdown-to-help-turn-back-tide-of-new-covid-19-cases-1.5192015>

Jacinda Ardern refutes China's claims it found coronavirus in meat imported from New Zealand

Jacinda Ardern has hit back at claims from China that traces of coronavirus were detected in frozen meat imported from New Zealand. The Prime Minister is now seeking official clarification from China in a determined bid to get to the bottom of the matter after claims emerged from the eastern province of Shandong. Health authorities in the Chinese city of Jinan claimed coronavirus was detected on beef, tripe and product packaging from Brazil, Bolivia and New Zealand.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8955759/amp/Jacinda-Ardern-refutes-Chinas-claims-coronavirus-meat-imported-New-Zealand.html>

UK shopper numbers plunge as English lockdown makes impact

Total shopper numbers across British retail destinations plummeted 57.7% in the week to Nov. 14 year-on-year, reflecting the impact of England's second national lockdown, market researcher Springboard said on Monday. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland enacted new COVID-19 health restrictions last month and England began a one-month lockdown on Nov. 5 to curb a second wave of the pandemic that has left the United Kingdom with Europe's highest death toll.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-retail-springboard/uk-shopper-numbers-down-57-7-as-english-lockdown-hits-idUKKBN27W12R?il=0>

How bad is Russia's Covid crisis? Packed morgues and excess deaths tell a darker story than official numbers suggest

The limbs of a lifeless body hang off a stretcher in a hospital ward as coronavirus patients battle for their lives just a few feet away. An elderly woman gasps for breath, her desperate panting a grim soundtrack to one of many disturbing cell-phone videos emerging from hospitals across Russia. "This is how our nights look: horrifying," says a male voice narrating the footage, given to CNN by a prominent opposition-linked Russian doctors' union, "Doctors' Alliance," which says it was recorded in mid-October by a hospital staff member in Ulyanovsk, a city around 500 miles east of Moscow. "Two more down in our ward," he says, while filming a corpse. "This is how Covid-19 is killing everybody."

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/17/europe/russia-coronavirus-pandemic-excess-deaths-intl/index.html>

Healthcare Innovations

Sinovac's COVID-19 vaccine induces quick immune response - study

Sinovac Biotech's experimental COVID-19 vaccine CoronaVac triggered a quick immune response but the level of antibodies produced was lower than in people who had recovered from the disease, preliminary trial results showed on Wednesday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-sinovac/sinovacs-covid-19-vaccine-induces-quick-immune-response-study-idUKKBN27Y041?il=0>

Pfizer launches Covid-19 vaccine delivery trial in four US states

Pfizer has launched a pilot delivery program for its experimental Covid-19 vaccine in four US states, as the drugmaker seeks to address distribution challenges posed by its ultra-cold storage requirements. The US drugmaker said it had selected Rhode Island, Texas, New Mexico, and Tennessee for the program because of their differences in overall size, diversity of populations and immunisation infrastructure, as well as the states' need to reach individuals in varied urban and rural settings.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/world/pfizer-launches-covid-19-vaccine-delivery-trial-in-four-us-states/ar-BB1b5BbA>

Covid: chemicals found in everyday products could hinder vaccine

The successful uptake of any vaccine for Covid-19, a crucial step in returning a sense of normalcy after a year ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic, could be hindered by widespread contamination from a range of chemicals used in everyday products. Small amounts of per- and polyfluoroalkyl (or PFAS) chemicals are commonly found in the bodies of people in the US, as well as several other countries. These man-made chemicals, used in everything from non-stick pans to waterproof clothes to pizza boxes, have been linked to an elevated risk of liver damage, decreased fertility and even cancer.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/17/chemicals-found-in-everyday-products-could-hinder-covid-19-vaccine>

J&J expects data for U.S. authorization of COVID-19 vaccine by February, says head scientist

Johnson & Johnson's chief scientist said the drugmaker is recruiting over 1,000 people per day for the late-stage trial of its experimental COVID-19 vaccine and expects to have all the data needed to seek U.S. authorization by February or earlier. "By the end of the year or around the end of the year, we should have 60,000 people in the study," Dr. Paul Stoffels, J&J's chief scientific officer, said in an interview ahead of this week's Reuters Total Health conference. "And efficacy endpoint should be there in the first few weeks or months, January or February, of the new year," he added.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-johnson-johnson-idUSKBN27X2R7?taid=5fb43c4d5ee68d0001b51b30&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

Roche on track to produce Regeneron's COVID-19 antibody cocktail

Roche Holding AG has completed early tests of its ability to produce large quantities of Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc's COVID-19 antibody treatment, putting it on track to begin manufacturing the drug once it is authorised by regulators, Regeneron's president said on Tuesday. The experimental therapy was used to treat United States President Donald Trump in October. The companies aim to be able to make two million doses of the antibody cocktail next year, but are awaiting clearance from regulators.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2020/11/17/regeneron-roche-tested-manufacture-of-covid-drug-trump-used>

Coronavirus: Phase three trials of India-made vaccine begin

Phase three trials of India's first vaccine against COVID-19 has started in what is the largest human trials to be conducted with about 26,000 participants, Bharat Biotech announced on Monday. The Hyderabad-based company has been developing the vaccine, Covaxin, in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - India's premier medical research body. The first doses of the vaccine were administered to volunteers at the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) in Hyderabad on Monday as part of the trial which will be monitored over the next year. Covaxin has shown promising safety and immunogenicity data in trials done during phase one and phase two, the company said. The India trial comes a day after the US biotech firm Moderna Inc said preliminary data from a continuing phase three study of its experimental COVID-19 vaccine showed it to be 94.5 percent effective.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/17/coronavirus-phase-3-trials-of-india-made-vaccine-begins>