

# Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

## 11th Nov 2021

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### Isolation Tips

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#### **Aucklanders return to malls as New Zealand eases lockdown in biggest city**

Article reports that sShops and malls in New Zealand's biggest city Auckland flung their doors open for the first time in three months on Wednesday as the city, which is at the epicentre of the country's coronavirus outbreak, gradually reopened. Retail stores filled up within hours of reopening due to pent up demand while some shoppers reportedly queued up outside malls overnight to take advantage of early bird offers at some stores.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/aucklanders-return-malls-new-zealand-eases-lockdown-biggest-city-2021-11-10/>

### Hygiene Helpers

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#### **Booster jab will be needed for Covid pass in future, Sajid Javid hints**

Older people will face restrictions on their freedoms in future if they choose not to have a Covid booster jab, the health secretary has suggested. Sajid Javid hinted the government is considering adopting a crackdown similar to that in France - which will require a third dose in order to be classed as "fully vaccinated" on the country's health pass.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/covid-pass-booster-jab-sajid-javid-b1954946.html>

#### **Belgium to extend coronavirus vaccine boosters to all**

Belgium intends to roll out COVID-19 vaccine third jabs for all citizens, a government minister said Wednesday. During an inter-ministerial conference on public health, ministers agreed to develop a "global vision" on third shots, tweeted Wouter Beke, minister of health and family. Details of the booster program will be ironed out at a meeting on November 27, he said, to "give vaccination centers the clarity they demand."

<https://www.politico.eu/article/belgium-to-extend-coronavirus-vaccine-boosters-to-all/>

#### **Covid-19 news: Booster shots now mandatory for French vaccine passes**

French people aged over 65 will have to have a third dose of the coronavirus vaccine to prove they have been fully vaccinated on their health passes from mid-December. The passes show if a person has been immunised, has recently recovered from infection or has recently had a negative test. In France they are needed for many common activities including going to restaurants and bars, libraries, the gym and for long-distance train and plane journeys. President Emmanuel Macron also said yesterday that boosters would be available for people between the ages of 50 and 65 from next month, and that use of health passes would increase. Although infection rates in France are lower than in some other European countries such as Germany, they are rising. Macron said a "fifth wave" of covid-19 had arrived in Europe. "We are not yet finished with the pandemic."

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2237475-covid-19-news-booster-shots-now-mandatory-for-french-vaccine-passes/>

#### **Chinese city says it mass tested 30000 for COVID-19 at mega centre, rounded-up runaways**

China's southwestern city of Chengdu said on Wednesday it had conducted 30,000 COVID-19 tests on visitors at a mega entertainment centre, and rounded-up those who tried to flee the site, in the second mass screening at a large venue in days. All COVID-19 tests returned negative results,

reported the official China Central Television (CCTV) on Tuesday. Those present were required to return home to await their results and not venture outdoors until advised, local authorities in Chengdu said in a notice

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/chinese-city-says-it-mass-tested-30000-covid-19-mega-centre-rounded-up-runaways-2021-11-10/>

### **Denmark revisits its 'corona pass' as third wave of epidemic looms**

Denmark's government on Monday proposed reinstating the use of a digital "corona pass" to be presented when Danes visit indoor bars and restaurants, as the country is entering a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Denmark was one of few countries to lift almost all remaining restrictions in September after having avoided a third wave of infections over spring and summer due to broad lockdown measures imposed since Christmas.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/denmark-reinstate-corona-passport-after-rise-infections-tv-2-2021-11-08/>

### **Understanding health care consumer preferences is key to effective Covid-19 vaccination messaging**

Health care, like politics, is local. The performance of certain procedures or the prevalence of particular conditions vary from community to community. So do individuals' preferences on how they choose to obtain care. One thing that doesn't vary as much is the trust people have in their providers. That's why throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, apart from mandates, frontline clinicians broadly have had the greatest impact on influencing the adoption of Covid-19 vaccines. Understanding the impact physicians have is particularly important as the country continues to drive vaccine uptake among adults, approach expanding eligibility to those under age 12, and begin the booster phase of Covid-19 vaccines.

<https://www.statnews.com/2021/11/10/health-care-consumer-preferences-effective-covid-19-vaccination-messaging/>

## **Community Activities**

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### **Europe Is Experiencing Two Very Different Pandemics**

Waning immunity is the bigger threat, and highly-inoculated countries like Spain or Denmark — where nearly 100% of over-60s have been fully vaccinated — are focused on zapping complacency with booster shots. Even controversial measures like health passes and mandatory shots for medical staff have paid off and lifted take-up despite protests. On Tuesday, French President Emmanuel Macron said France's Covid pass would require third doses for the elderly. These countries have some of the world's highest vaccination rates, and, as Lone Simonsen, a professor at Roskilde University, puts it, they have the "luxury" of making minor adjustments, such as bringing back mask-wearing, to avoid a return to the full-scale lockdowns of 2020. Look further East, though, and there are signs of a "pandemic of the unvaccinated," to borrow a U.S. term. Vaccination rates in eastern European countries are far, far lower — often fatally so.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2021-11-10/covid-in-europe-france-spain-bulgaria-romania-see-different-pandemics>

### **The US and Europe have finally reconnected, but they're moving in different directions on Covid-19**

In September, when the White House announced its long-awaited plan to welcome vaccinated European travelers, the United States was consumed by a Covid-19 surge that far outpaced Europe's. At that point the US rate of new cases per capita dwarfed Europe's by nearly three to one. While European governments were plotting their roadmaps towards normality, America was battling a rise in infections and warning of pressure on hospitals. But by Monday, when the new rules came into effect and thousands of tourists jetted across the Atlantic to American cities, the two regions had experienced a dramatic reversal in fortunes.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/10/europe/us-europe-covid-winter-comparisons-intl-cmd/index.html>

## **Working Remotely**

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### **Remote work can't be fixed by the metaverse**

Startup CEO Claudia Reuter observes that creating purpose and building a true sense of community are both essential to reducing burnout and unlocking stronger employee engagement, but neither can be solved simply in a trendy virtual space.

<https://www.fastcompany.com/90694973/the-metaverse-wont-be-able-to-fix-this-major-work-issue-heres-what-will>

### **Two-thirds of CMOs fear creativity will be impacted by remote working, study finds**

While many brands have discovered a hybrid working model can be effective, the majority of CMOs fear continual lack of physical communication between marketers could impact creativity. The study by LinkedIn, which was shared exclusively with Marketing Week, finds 58% of senior marketers already believe the pandemic has weakened social ties between staff as some team members have never met in person.

<https://www.marketingweek.com/cmos-fear-creativity-hybrid-working/>

## **Virtual Classrooms**

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### **CT legislators consider permanent virtual school as interest grows**

A program called TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School (TECCA), a tuition-free K-12 public school in East Walpole, Mass., opened its doors in 2014 with 200 students and 14 staff members. The idea behind it was to give students throughout Massachusetts a different learning option. Now enrollment has skyrocketed to 2,700 students with a waitlist in the thousands. Staff has also increased to 190, including teachers, counselors and social workers.

<https://ctmirror.org/2021/11/09/ct-legislators-consider-permanent-virtual-school-as-interest-grows/>

## **Public Policies**

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### **Pfizer, BioNTech Ask FDA to Expand Covid-19 Booster Use to All Adults**

Pfizer Inc. and partner BioNTech asked U.S. health regulators to expand the authorization of their Covid-19 booster to people as young as 18 years old, as the government explores expanding access to extra doses. The application opens the door for authorization of the extra dose potentially before the end of the year, which could provide millions of people with another layer of security as winter drives many indoors where the risk of transmission is higher. The Food and Drug Administration in September cleared a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for adults who are 65 years and older or are at risk of severe disease and death, including because of their jobs or where they live.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/pfizer-biontech-ask-fda-to-expand-covid-19-booster-use-to-all-adults-11636489789>

### **U.S. Spending \$650 Million to Expand Rapid Confirmatory Testing**

The U.S. will spend \$650 million to increase production and access to rapid diagnostic tests that can confirm the results of at-home screening, part of an effort to quickly identify and treat people with Covid-19. People who buy over-the-counter rapid antigen tests at pharmacies may need confirmatory testing to verify the accuracy of the result, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services said Wednesday in a statement. The funds will help ensure such tests are readily available across the country and can provide results quickly, the agency said. The investment follows the Biden administration's commitment of more than \$3 billion for rapid home tests that may need confirmation. The earlier funding aimed to quadruple the amount of rapid home tests available in the U.S. by December, to about 200 million a month.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-10/u-s-spending-650-million-to-expand-rapid-confirmatory-testing>

### **S.Korea urges COVID-19 booster shots, as severe cases hit record**

South Korea encouraged its citizens to take COVID-19 booster shots on Wednesday, as more of the

elderly fell ill and reported vaccine breakthrough infections, driving serious and critical cases to a record. Severe coronavirus cases jumped from the mid-300s in October to 460 on Wednesday, official data showed. Of the severely ill patients, more than 82% were aged 60 and older. Son Young-rae, a senior health ministry official, told a news conference that the increase is not posing a threat to the country's healthcare system yet, as there are nearly 500 ICU beds available.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skorea-urges-covid-19-booster-shots-severe-cases-hit-record-2021-11-10/>

### **Vietnam approves India's COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin**

Vietnam has approved India's Covaxin vaccine for emergency use, the ninth to be endorsed in the country, the country's health ministry said on Wednesday. The government said in July it was seeking to secure 15 million doses of the Covaxin vaccine made by Bharat Biotech.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/vietnam-approves-indias-covid-19-vaccine-covaxin-2021-11-10/>

### **Health workers in England must get COVID vaccine by April 1 -minister**

Health workers in England will have to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by April 1, health minister Sajid Javid said on Tuesday, making it a mandatory condition of employment for those on the frontline of the National Health Service (NHS). Prime Minister Boris Johnson is seeking to navigate a difficult winter for the health system without further economically damaging lockdowns to help protect against COVID-19 contagion.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/health-workers-england-required-get-covid-vaccine-minister-2021-11-09/>

### **EU to decide on Moderna's COVID-19 shot for younger kids in two months**

The European Union's drug regulator expects to decide in about two months on whether to allow the use of Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine in children aged six to 11 years, it said on Wednesday, after the U.S. drugmaker sought approval. "The current timeline for evaluation foresees an opinion in approximately 2 months, unless supplementary information or analysis is needed," the European Medicines Agency (EMA) said in a statement.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/eu-decide-modernas-covid-19-shot-younger-kids-two-months-2021-11-10/>

### **As many try living with virus, China keeps up zero tolerance**

Article reports that Wang Lijie planned to spend three days in the Gobi Desert last month to take in the area's famous poplar forest as its trees turned a golden yellow. Instead, the Beijing resident has been stuck for more than three weeks, much of it in quarantine, after authorities discovered a cluster of COVID-19 cases in a nearby city. He was among more than 9,000 tourists who became trapped in Ejin Banner, a remote part of China's Inner Mongolia region that is in the Gobi. As vaccination rates rise in many parts of the world and even countries that previously had strict COVID-containment strategies gingerly ease restrictions, China is doubling down on its zero-tolerance policy.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-immigration-business-taiwan-wuhan-a5bf3cccf435a5adf45faa57758c9f7>

## **Maintaining Services**

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### **WHO highlights that Europe is only region with rising COVID cases and deaths, as Russia overtakes U.S. for most fatalities in a week**

The World Health Organization highlighted Wednesday that Europe was the only region showing rising cases and deaths from the coronavirus-borne illness COVID-19 in the latest week, led by Russia, where low vaccine take-up is believed to be responsible for about 1,200 deaths a day. Russia counted 281,305 new cases in the week to Nov. 7, according to the agency's weekly epidemiological update, or 371.4 new cases per 100,000 residents. There were 8,276 new fatalities in Russia in the

week, or 5.7 new deaths per 100,000 residents, little changed from the prior week. Russia set yet another one-day record death toll on Wednesday of 1,239, and is now leading the world by weekly deaths for the first time since the start of the pandemic, the Moscow Times reported.

<https://www.marketwatch.com/story/who-highlights-that-europe-is-only-region-with-rising-covid-cases-and-deaths-as-russia-overtakes-u-s-for-most-fatalities-in-a-week-11636558256>

### **Two Million Ellume Covid Tests Recalled on False Positive Risk**

Ellume Ltd. is recalling 2.2 million at-home Covid-19 tests because they risk returning false positives, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said. The regulator classified the action on Wednesday as a class I recall, the most serious kind, saying it has received 35 reports of false positives from the test made by the Australian company. Incorrect results could lead a person to wrongly receive Covid-19 treatments or isolate when they don't need to, the FDA said. "The Ellume team offers its sincere apologies for the stress or difficulties people may have experienced due to a false positive result," a company spokesperson said in an email. "We have and will continue to work diligently to ensure test accuracy, in all cases."

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-10/two-million-ellume-covid-tests-recalled-on-false-positive-risk>

### **Germany coronavirus: Record rise prompts warning of 100,000 deaths**

One of Germany's top virologists has warned that a further 100,000 people will die from Covid if nothing's done to halt an aggressive fourth wave. Case numbers have soared and Germany on Wednesday registered its highest rate of infection since the pandemic began, with almost 40,000 cases in a day. "We have to act right now," said Christian Drosten, who described a real emergency situation. Doctors in the intensive care Covid ward at Leipzig University Hospital warn this fourth wave could be the worst yet.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59234443>

### **Singapore will stop covering the medical bills of unvaccinated COVID-19 patients**

Singapore's government has been covering the medical bills of COVID-19 patients throughout the pandemic. But it says unvaccinated people will soon be on their own. Those who are "unvaccinated by choice" will have to start paying for their own COVID-19 treatment starting Dec. 8, the Ministry of Health announced on Monday, citing the strain they are putting on the nation's health care system. "Currently, unvaccinated persons make up a sizeable majority of those who require intensive inpatient care, and disproportionately contribute to the strain on our healthcare resources," it said in a statement.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/11/09/1053889069/singapore-medical-bills-covid-19-patients-unvaccinated-by-choice>

### **Thailand offers COVID-19 vaccines to migrant workers**

Thailand will set aside up to 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines for foreign workers as it prepares to welcome them back to the country to help ease a labour shortage, a government minister said on Wednesday. The government plans to allow workers from neighbouring Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos to re-enter the country beginning next month and fill up shortages in big exporting industries such as food and rubber production. Workers will be placed in a two-week quarantine and during that time the vaccines will be administered, Labor Minister Suchart Chomklin said. They will also be tested for COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-offers-covid-19-vaccines-migrant-workers-2021-11-10/>

### **Guinea starts vaccinating children against COVID-19 with Pfizer, Moderna**

Guinea will begin vaccinating children aged 12-17 against COVID-19 with a consignment of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines on Wednesday, the health ministry said. Most African countries have been reliant on the COVAX vaccine sharing initiative for doses, and have inoculated only a small fraction of their populations. Guinea received a quantity of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines in late

October and early November, the National Agency for Health Security said in a statement. It did not say how many doses were received or from where.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/guinea-starts-vaccinating-children-against-covid-19-with-pfizer-moderna-2021-11-10/>

### **COVID-19 surges expand in Europe**

At least three countries, all with low vaccination rates, reported new daily record highs for deaths: Russia, Ukraine, and Bulgaria, according to media reports. Russia recently ended a week-long non-working period, and federal officials said it's too soon to tell if the step helped cut transmission, according to the Washington Post, which said less than 40% of the country is fully vaccinated. Cases are on the rise, however, even in countries with robust vaccine uptake. In the Netherlands, where cases have been rising since early October, the adult vaccination level is about 85%. A hospital group in the southern province of Limburg today urged the government to take stronger measures, warning that they are out of space and staff and that other areas may soon face similar situations, according to Reuters.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/11/covid-19-surges-expand-europe>

## **Healthcare Innovations**

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### **Israeli MRI study finds heart damage from COVID-19 vaccine is rare and mild**

A study conducted by Beilinson Hospital in Petah Tikva, using a detailed scanning technique to examine patients with symptoms of a heart muscle condition after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, found that damage was rare, mild, and expected to heal. The study used cardiac magnetic resonance imaging on patients diagnosed with myocarditis, a weakening of the heart muscles that has been found in a few patients after they were inoculated. A link has been seen in recent months between coronavirus vaccines using mRNA technology and very rare cases of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the lining around the heart).

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-mri-study-finds-heart-damage-from-covid-19-vaccine-is-rare-and-mild/>

### **Long COVID symptoms may have causes other than SARS-CoV-2**

A French study finds that, of 20 persistent physical symptoms reported by adults who said they had recovered from COVID-19, only 1 was linked to SARS-CoV-2 infection, as indicated by the presence of antibodies to the virus. The researchers, however, said that the results don't discount the presence of symptoms but rather underscore the importance of considering all possible causes in addition to COVID-19, such as other diseases, anxiety, or deconditioning related to the pandemic but not the virus itself. The study, published yesterday in JAMA Internal Medicine, involved analysis of blood samples from 26,823 adult participants who reported recovering from COVID-19.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/11/long-covid-symptoms-may-have-causes-other-sars-cov-2>