

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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News Highlights

Australia to begin vaccine rollout next month

An immunisation campaign against Covid-19 will begin mid-to-late February in Australia. [The government is seeking to inoculate 80,000 people a week and to cover four million people by the end of March.](#) The effort will be 'the most complex logistical exercise in Australian history,' according to Department of Health Secretary Brandon Murphy.

UK vaccine plans unveiled by Boris Johnson

The UK has already inoculated almost 1.5 million people against the novel coronavirus, according to Prime Minister Boris Johnson. [Unveiling details of the government's immunisation plan following the distribution of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine to GPs nationwide,](#) he acknowledged there would be 'lumpiness and bumpiness' in the rollout and emphasised 'this is a national challenge on a scale like nothing we've ever seen before and it will require an unprecedented national effort.'

Silent spread to Wuhan?

New research suggests people in Wuhan, where the pandemic began, were asymptotically infected with Covid-19 even after the official data reported no cases in spring last year. [A study of 63,000 blood samples taken between March 3 and May 6, mostly from the city, found 1.7 percent contained antibodies against the novel coronavirus.](#) This suggests 168,000 had been infected overall in Wuhan at that point, far higher than official tallies, and that there were asymptomatic carriers even 'after the elimination of clinical cases.'

Europe cases pass 25 million

The pandemic has witnessed a minimum of 25,016,506 cases of Covid-19 and 559,863 fatalities in Europe, according to a Reuters analysis. [Many European nations are facing stricter lockdown measures, according to to combat surges in cases,](#) amidst the spread of a more contagious variant. Home to ten percent of the global population but thirty percent of cases, Europe remains the region worst-affected by Covid-19.

Lockdown Exit

Rush to administer coronavirus vaccine to all hospital staff

Hospitals have been told by NHS England to immediately step up efforts to vaccinate all their staff. Yesterday GPs started administering the Oxford Astrazeneca vaccine to protect care home residents

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rush-to-administer-coronavirus-vaccine-to-all-hospital-staff-tk6xp9mkb>

Pharmacies set for role in Wales coronavirus vaccination plan

Pharmacies in Wales are set to become involved in the process of vaccinating people against coronavirus, with discussions going on over how that will happen, says Wales' Chief Medical Officer. Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, like its counterparts across Wales, has been checking the

suitability of community and other venues across Gwent that might be suitable for use as mass vaccination centres, and GP surgeries will also play a central role. The challenge in Wales, as it is across the UK, is to provide sufficient vaccination sites to enable as many people in the priority groups to be vaccinated as quickly as possible - and Wales' CMO Dr Frank Atherton said all health boards in Wales are developing plans to "rapidly increase the vaccine coverage".

<https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/18991986.pharmacies-set-role-wales-coronavirus-vaccination-plan/>

More than 1000 Swindon residents volunteer for coronavirus vaccine studies

The rollout of the coronavirus vaccine is under way across the UK, giving hope for a way out of the crisis which changed our lives nearly a year ago. But developing a vaccine wouldn't have been possible without a pool of volunteers from across the four nations, with more than 1,000 people from Swindon putting their name forward to be a part of the effort. Researchers need people to take part in studies to find out which potential vaccine is most effective, and those involved are required to visit a hospital or research site every few months.

<https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/18994013.1-000-swindon-residents-volunteer-coronavirus-vaccine-studies/>

Coronavirus vaccine will be rolled out in Australia in February

Australians will start getting vaccinated against Covid-19 in mid-February and the jab may be compulsory for some people, Scott Morrison announced on Thursday. The prime minister said he expects regulators to approve the Pfizer vaccine, which has already been rolled out around the world, before the end of January. The American company ships the vaccine two weeks after approval and then another week will be spent testing the batch when it arrives in Australia. Hotel quarantine workers, healthcare workers and aged care staff and residents will be vaccinated first. Elderly people, indigenous Australians over 55, people with clinical conditions and high-risk workers will be next.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9120707/Scott-Morrison-announces-coronavirus-vaccine-rolled-mid-February.html>

Australia's vaccine rollout will now start next month. Here's what we'll need

Australia's COVID vaccine rollout will now begin in mid- to late February. Vaccination will commence with workers dealing with international arrivals or quarantine facilities, frontline health workers and those living in aged care or with a disability. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the government "optimistically" aims to vaccinate 80,000 Australians a week, and four million by the end of March. The first vaccine doses were initially planned for March, but the rollout has now been brought forward, pending the Therapeutic Goods Administration's approval of the Pfizer vaccine, anticipated by the end of January.

<https://theconversation.com/australias-vaccine-rollout-will-now-start-next-month-heres-what-well-need-152612>

Covid 19 coronavirus: Four new cases in managed isolation; 2 more infections linked to UK strain

There are four cases of Covid-19 in managed isolation in New Zealand - and officials have linked two more cases to the rapidly-spreading UK coronavirus strain. There are no new cases in the community, the Ministry of Health says. The total number of active Covid-19 cases in New Zealand is 62.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/covid-19-coronavirus-four-new-cases-in-managed-isolation-2-more-infections-linked-to-uk-strain/EF2T2PSI2I2D2CADFFCUCWKSBE/>

Covid vaccine: National vaccination booking system will be launched in the UK

A new national system allowing the public to book a Covid-19 vaccination will be launched in the UK to make it easier to roll out the immunisation programme, Boris Johnson has announced. The Prime Minister said during a press conference on Thursday that nearly 1.5 million people have now been

vaccinated against coronavirus in the UK, including 1.26 million in England. The process of getting a vaccination will be made easier, he said, by the launch of the new national appointment booking service – but did not reveal any further details about how it would work.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/covid-vaccine-booking-national-vaccination-system-launch-uk-821211>

Pharmacies to roll out Covid vaccine in ‘Herculean effort’ to immunise Britain

High street pharmacies will form a major part of the “Herculean effort” to vaccinate the nation against coronavirus, the vaccines tsar has announced. Nadhim Zahawi, the minister for Covid Vaccine Deployment, told BBC’s Today programme that community pharmacy networks will be “very much involved” in plans to vaccinate 13.4m Brits by mid-February. Current government plans will see vaccines given to GPs to be rolled out to the public, then national vaccination centres, and then distributed across local pharmacies, Zahawi announced. “The NHS has a very clear plan and I’m confident that we can meet it,” he said, adding that it would require a “Herculean effort” to roll out the jab to the most vulnerable in just seven weeks’ time. It comes after ministers were yesterday accused of ignoring an army of trained vaccinators at pharmacies. Simon Dukes, the chief executive of the Pharmaceutical Negotiating Services Committee, told the Telegraph the NHS was “scrabbling around” for vaccinators while trained medics in the pharmaceutical industry were ready to help.

<https://www.cityam.com/pharmacies-to-roll-out-covid-vaccine-in-herculean-effort-to-immunise-britain/>

Coronavirus Northern Ireland: We may never return to normality despite success of vaccine, warns Professor Young

After almost a year living under the shadow of a pandemic, the approval of two Covid-19 vaccines finally brought some hope to a world weary of coronavirus. There isn't a part of our lives that hasn't been affected by Covid-19 - schools are closed for the third time, life-saving operations are being cancelled, the business community is on its knees, even the simple act of giving a loved one a hug is no longer acceptable. Throughout everything that Covid-19 has thrown at us, we've held on to the day when a vaccine would be rolled out and lives could finally return to normal.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/coronavirus-northern-ireland-we-may-never-return-to-normality-despite-success-of-vaccine-warns-professor-young-39945197.html>

England to require travellers to show negative COVID tests

Britain’s government will require people entering England to present a negative COVID-19 test result on arrival starting next week to protect against new strains of the coronavirus from other countries, the government said on Friday. Passengers arriving by boat, plane or train will have to take a test up to 72 hours before departing for England, the transport ministry said, mirroring measures taken by many other countries around the world. “We already have significant measures in place to prevent imported cases of COVID-19, but with new strains of the virus developing internationally we must take further precautions,” Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said in a statement. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson ordered a new lockdown for England this week after a surge in cases linked to a new variant of the coronavirus believed to have originated in the country.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-travellers/england-to-require-travellers-to-show-negative-covid-tests-idUSKBN29D009>

UK extends England entry ban to travellers from 11 African countries for COVID variant

The United Kingdom said on Thursday it would extend a ban on travellers entering England to southern African countries in a measure to prevent the spread of a new COVID-19 variant identified in South Africa. “Entry into England will be banned to those who have travelled from or through any southern African country in the last 10 days, including Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Eswatini, Zambia, Malawi, Lesotho, Mozambique and Angola – as well as Seychelles and Mauritius,” the country’s Department for Transport said. In addition, it said, “Israel (and Jerusalem) would be removed from the list of travel corridors for England and people arriving from Jan. 9 from Botswana,

Israel (and Jerusalem), Mauritius or Seychelles would need to self-isolate.”

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-uk-travel/uk-extends-england-entry-ban-to-travellers-from-11-african-countries-for-covid-variant-idUSKBN29C2W9>

Exit Strategies

15,000 Covid-19 vaccines administered in Ireland

More than 15,000 people have received their first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine in Ireland to date. The country's health chief said a total of 35,000 people will have received the Pfizer BioNTech jab by the end of the week. Paul Reid described the State's coronavirus vaccination programme as the “great light” and “great hope” as the country faces the weeks ahead. A total of 15,314 people have been given vaccinated since December 29. “It has given a great lift to the country and it has given a great inspirational lift to our healthcare workers,” he said.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/15000-covid-19-vaccines-administered-in-ireland-39944455.html>

Most vulnerable to get vaccine by mid-Feb as Covid deaths soar

The UK has recorded more than 1,000 new coronavirus deaths overnight for the second day in a row while hospital admissions have risen above the peak of the first wave, new figures show. Some 3,600 Covid-19 patients were admitted to hospital in the UK on January 3, the first time it has been higher than the peak of 3,565 recorded on April 1. It comes as London's hospitals are on the verge of being overwhelmed as health bosses scramble to find more beds to deal with a surge in infections across the country. The sobering figures were published as Boris Johnson admitted that the UK roll-out of Covid vaccines is a “challenge on a scale like nothing we've seen before”.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/uk-coronavirus-live-latest-updates-london-hospitals-vaccine-b734847.html>

GPs struggling with Covid vaccine delivery timing uncertainties

GPs are having to do a ‘huge amount’ of cancellations and rebooking of Covid vaccine appointments amid last-minute changes to vaccine delivery times, regional GP leaders have claimed. LMC leaders said this was giving practices ‘a headache’ and called for some ‘assurance’ about ‘when vaccine will be supplied’. This week, GP sites in wave five of the rollout were expecting their first vaccine deliveries between Wednesday and Friday, while sites in wave six will be told today (Thursday 7 January) whether they have passed their ‘readiness assessment’ to commence vaccinations next week. Slides presented in an NHS England webinar for GPs on Tuesday evening said ‘site-specific delivery dates have been confirmed’.

<https://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/news/coronavirus/gps-struggling-with-covid-vaccine-delivery-timing-uncertainties/>

Belgian government under fire over slow pace of coronavirus vaccinations

All over Europe, governments are feeling the heat over botched vaccination strategies — as is the European Commission. Belgium, which started its coronavirus vaccination plan in earnest on Tuesday, is no exception. After an earful from opposition lawmakers on Tuesday, Belgian Health Minister Frank Vandenbroucke asked the country's vaccination task force to speed up and readjust its strategy. It's set to meet on Thursday, with an announcement expected on Friday morning. The move comes after health workers asked Vandenbroucke to be prioritized for the job in an open letter dated Tuesday. About 700 residents and staff of care homes have gotten their first shot as of January 2, when the government provided its latest update on the tally. In Germany, by contrast, roughly 317,000 doses have been administered, and about 182,000 in Italy.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/belgium-government-criticism-coronavirus-vaccine-campaign-frank-vandenbroucke/>

Nicola Sturgeon confirms covid vaccine to be rolled out to all over 80s in next four weeks

All over-80s in Scotland will receive their first dose of the coronavirus vaccine in the next four weeks, Nicola Sturgeon has announced. Speaking at today's daily briefing, the First Minister

confirmed that 113,459 people have received their first dose of the Pfizer vaccine, with the Oxford/AstraZeneca inoculation being first used on Monday. She said: "I can confirm that this shows that by Sunday, the 30th of January, 113,459 individuals had received their first tools of the Pfizer Covid vaccine.

<https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/nicola-sturgeon-confirms-covid-vaccine-19581978>

Covid-19: PM sets out Covid vaccine rollout plan

PM says he has "no doubt" there is enough supply to vaccinate the first four priority groups by 15 February. NHS CEO Sir Simon Stevens says there will be a "huge acceleration" in the vaccination programme over the coming weeks. Army logistics expert Brigadier Phil Prosser says his mission is to get vaccines "in arms not on shelves." A further 1,162 people have died in the UK within 28 days of a positive coronavirus test. The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is being rolled out to hundreds of GP-run vaccination centres in England. Nearly 1.5 million people across the UK have now had their first dose, Boris Johnson says. A weekly doorstep round of applause returns at 20:00 GMT - under the new name of Clap for Heroes

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/world-55571230>

Hancock: 'We're working with Pfizer and AstraZeneca to increase Covid-19 vaccine supply'

Health Secretary Matt Hancock visited a GP surgery in London to promote the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines. Mr Hancock said they were working with the Pfizer and AstraZeneca to increase the supply.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/health-55573069>

Covid-19: PM says jab rollout needs 'unprecedented effort' as two more life-saving drugs found

The vaccine rollout is a national challenge requiring an unprecedented effort involving the armed forces, Boris Johnson has said. At a Downing Street press briefing, the PM confirmed almost 1.5 million people in the UK have now received at least one dose of a Covid vaccine. More than 1,000 GP-led sites in England will be able to offer a total of "hundreds of thousands" of jabs each day by 15 January, he said. The Army will use "battle preparation techniques" to help achieve that goal. It comes as GPs in England began receiving doses of the Oxford Covid jab.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-55574920>

Boris Johnson says 1.5million Covid-19 vaccines have been administered and says everyone should get one within 10 miles

Nearly 1.5million coronavirus vaccines have been administered in the UK, Boris Johnson announced on Thursday as he said he was "throwing everything" at the roll-out of the national jabs programme.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/newslondon/boris-johnson-says-15million-covid-19-vaccines-have-been-administered-and-says-everyone-should-get-one-within-10-miles/ar-BB1cyz4h>

Covid-19: Vaccine rollout widens as hospital pressure rises

GPs in England are receiving doses of the Oxford Covid jab as medics warn about overstretched hospitals. The rollout of the Oxford vaccine is part of the NHS's biggest-ever effort and aims to offer jabs to 13 million by mid-February - including all over-80s. But Health Secretary Matt Hancock admitted vaccine supply was a "rate-limiting" factor. Birmingham's NHS said there are enough supplies with more to come as politicians warned doses may run out. Some hospitals in England are at risk of becoming Covid-only sites, with rising admissions for the virus forcing trusts to cut back on other services.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-55576788>

Matt Hancock says third lockdown will be England's last because of coronavirus vaccines

Health Secretary Matt Hancock told MPs that people may need to have a coronavirus vaccine every six months. But he said he believed this would be the last lockdown that was required, because of the coronavirus vaccines. "There is absolutely no doubt that vaccines and testing will still be a feature next year," he told the Health and Social Care Committee. "We will need both the surveillance testing to be able to understand where the virus is and we will need testing for people who have symptoms, in the same way that you get tested for all sorts of other things." On vaccines, Mr Hancock said: "I anticipate we will probably need to revaccinate because we don't know the longevity of the protection from these vaccines."

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/matt-hancock-says-third-lockdown-19582292>

Partisan Exits

British health minister defends decision to space COVID-19 vaccine doses

Britain's move to delay the second doses of COVID-19 vaccines will help save lives as more people will be able to get some initial protection, health minister Matt Hancock said on Thursday, defending a policy shift questioned by some scientists. The abrupt change of tack on Dec. 30 meant people who had been due to receive their second vaccine doses had their appointments cancelled in favour of scheduling more initial shots for others. Some scientists expressed doubts about the decision to alter proven dosing regimes. Hancock said partial protection for more people would do more good than full protection for a select few. "The justification is really clear and straightforward, which is that it saves more lives, and ultimately, that is the public health justification," Hancock told lawmakers.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-vaccine-do/british-health-minister-defends-decision-to-space-covid-19-vaccine-doses-idUSKBN29C2FW>

Council leader's plea to Hancock as Pfizer jab due to 'run out' soon

Local leaders in Birmingham have said the city has not been supplied with stock of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine with supplies of its Pfizer/BioNTech counterpart also due to "run out" on Friday. In an open letter to the Health Secretary Matt Hancock, Birmingham City Council leader Ian Ward called for exact data on constituency vaccination numbers to be shared with local officials. The letter, sent on behalf of Birmingham's ten MPs, including Sutton Coldfield's Conservative MP Andrew Mitchell, sought "urgent clarity and reassurance" regarding the vaccination rollout across the city over the coming weeks and months.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2021-01-07/covid-birmingham-council-leaders-plea-to-matt-hancock-as-pfizer-vaccine-due-to-run-out-with-no-supply-of-oxford-jab>

Trust in COVID-19 vaccine grows after months of decline, polls show

Confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine is growing, a USA TODAY analysis of dozens of polls and scientific papers shows. Surveys in recent weeks show close to 60% of respondents saying they'd get the COVID-19 vaccine, up from a low of 1 in 2 Americans polled in September. A Pew Research Center survey of 12,648 Americans in late November showed 60% said they'd get the vaccine if it were available today, up from 51% polled in September. The Kaiser Family Foundation noted a similar increase, with 71% of the 1,676 surveyed indicating they'd accept a COVID-19 vaccine, up from 63% in September. USA TODAY's analysis drew on methods used by Duke University and Florida State University researchers and by the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices to summarize vaccine polling.

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/2021/01/05/trust-covid-19-vaccine-increasing-after-months-decline/4134805001/>

21 arrested at anti-lockdown protest in London, Met says

Some 21 people have been arrested amid anti-lockdown protests held near parliament Square in central London. Wednesday's demonstrations took place just days after England was placed in a

national lockdown due to rising Covid-19 cases. Video and images posted to social media show a large police presence and a number of demonstrators being removed from the scene. Earlier today, the Met's deputy assistant commissioner, Laurence Taylor, warned those planning to protest to "stay at home".

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/covid-anti-lockdown-protest-parliament-square-london-b1783258.html>

People may need coronavirus vaccine 'every six months', Matt Hancock says

People may need coronavirus vaccine 'every six months', Matt Hancock has suggested. The Health Secretary was answering questions from MPs on the Health and Social Care Committee. His comments come on the day GP surgeries in England began administering the Oxford/AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine. Mr Hancock also said he believed this would be the last lockdown that was required because of the vaccine roll-out. "There is absolutely no doubt that vaccines and testing will still be a feature next year," he told MPs.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/uk-news/coronavirus-vaccine-every-six-months-19582801>

Some Israeli Arabs, Jerusalem Palestinians wary of coronavirus vaccine

As Israel leads the world in the rate of coronavirus vaccination, some of its Arab citizens and Palestinians in annexed East Jerusalem are regarding the shot with suspicion. In what officials see as a result of misinformation about possible side effects or supposed malicious properties, turnout for vaccines has been low among Arabs, who make up 21% of Israel's population, and Jerusalem Palestinians. "I will not be vaccinated because I don't know what is in there. No one explained it to me," said Marouf Alyino of East Jerusalem. "Everyone is looking at Facebook and social media, where we hear about someone dying (after getting vaccinated)."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-israel-palestinian/some-israeli-arabs-jerusalem-palestinians-wary-of-coronavirus-vaccine-idUKKBN29C1NO>

Patients refusing Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine to 'wait for English jab', doctor claims

People are reportedly delaying getting the potentially life-saving jab as the UK hit the highest number of coronavirus deaths today since the first wave in April

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/patients-refusing-pfizer-vaccine-wait-23281531>

Continued Lockdown

Merkel aide warns of longer lockdown in Germany if rules too lax

Germany faces the risk of a much longer coronavirus lockdown if the federal states do not consistently implement tougher restrictions, especially in light of a highly contagious new variant, an aide to Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Thursday. "With every relaxation now, the likelihood of even longer necessary restrictions is greater and greater," Helge Braun, head of Merkel's office, told Reuters in an interview. Like many other European countries, Germany is struggling to contain a second wave of the virus.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-germany-braun/merkel-aide-warns-of-longer-lockdown-in-germany-if-rules-too-lax-idUKKBN29C1HK>

Canada's Quebec imposes curfew, extends lockdown as COVID-19 cases soar

Canada's Quebec province will impose a curfew starting on Saturday and extend an existing lockdown through Feb. 8, to curb the spread of the coronavirus, as it works to speed up a vaccination campaign to counter soaring cases of COVID-19. The new curfew will run from 8 pm to 5 am, even as non-essential businesses remain shut and home gatherings are prohibited as part of a "shock treatment" to save lives and the province's health network, Premier François Legault said on Wednesday. Schools will remain open, he said. Quebec is wrestling with more than 2,500 COVID-19 cases a day, a surge that threatens to increase hospitalizations beyond their spring peak in the next

few weeks.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-canada/canadas-quebec-imposes-curfew-extends-lockdown-as-covid-19-cases-soar-idUKKBN29B2LF>

Ireland tightens lockdown as COVID-19 'tsunami' threatens hospitals

Ireland announced its strictest lockdown measures since early last year on Wednesday as a "tsunami" of infections caused by a new COVID-19 variant pushed hospitalisations to a record high and sparked fears the healthcare system could be overwhelmed. Ireland's 14-day infection rate has quadrupled in the past 10 days to 819 cases per 100,000, fueled by a new more transmissible COVID-19 variant first identified in Britain and the relaxation of restrictions ahead of Christmas. Officials reported a record high of 7,836 cases on Wednesday. "Already exhausted healthcare workers now face a tsunami of infection even greater than the first wave," Prime Minister Micheal Martin told a news conference announcing the new measures. "In addition we have a more infectious strain of the virus in our midst... which can rapidly lead to growth well beyond previous worst case scenarios."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-ireland-idUKKBN29B2PF>

Scientific Viewpoint

English health chief says people will get COVID booster shots after guidance change

The head of England's National Health Service reassured people that they would get their second COVID vaccinations after some appointments were cancelled in order to prioritise giving out more initial doses of the shot. "People will get their second jabs (shots), whether that's Pfizer or AstraZeneca," said Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of the National Health Service (NHS), when asked by Reuters at a news conference about the change in guidance which delays second shots for most people to up to 12 weeks after the first dose. He added that the reprioritisation of shots would mean that twice as many people would be offered first doses of the vaccine over the next several weeks.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-vaccines-n/english-health-chief-says-people-will-get-covid-booster-shots-after-guidance-change-idUSKBN29C2MH>

Moderna's coronavirus vaccine likely prevents infection for 'a couple of YEARS,' CEO says

Moderna Inc CEO Stéphane Bancel said on Thursday the firm's coronavirus vaccine will likely protect for at least 'a couple of years.' He says this is because levels of antibodies against COVID-19 in humans decreases very slowly. Although more research is needed, Bancel said enough evidence shows there is no 'nightmare scenario' of the jab working for just a month or two. Bancel says the biotechnology company is currently working on research that will show it protects against the new variants from the UK and South Africa

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9123635/Modernas-coronavirus-vaccine-likely-prevents-infection-couple-YEARS-CEO-says.html>

COVID-19 was circulating silently in Wuhan even after the city reported no cases

COVID-19 may have continued to spread silently in Wuhan, China, during the spring of 2020, even after official government tallies had suggested the coronavirus had been stamped out, a new study suggests. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, was first discovered in Wuhan in December 2019, and the city soon became the epicenter of what would become the COVID-19 pandemic. Cases peaked in Wuhan in February 2020 but soon declined rapidly, with just a few cases reported in late March. By early April, the city's lockdown had ended, and later that month, Wuhan was declared coronavirus-free.

<https://www.livescience.com/wuhan-covid-19-silent-spread.html>

Look out, pharma. A 'tidal wave' of side effect reports is coming amid COVID-19 vaccine

rollouts

With COVID-19 vaccine launches gaining steam—and an unprecedented level of media coverage zeroed in—pharma companies of all stripes should brace for a wave of side effect reports, experts say. And it won't just intensify adverse-event tracking,

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/watch-out-pharma-a-tidal-wave-adverse-event-reports-coming-amid-covid-19-vaccine-rollouts>

How Nine Covid-19 Vaccines Work

Researchers are testing 64 coronavirus vaccines in clinical trials on humans. Here are explanations about how nine of the leading vaccines work.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/health/how-covid-19-vaccines-work.html>

UAE starts trials of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine as cases rise

Abu Dhabi has started Phase III clinical trials of Russia's Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine amid a surge in infections in the United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi's media office said on Thursday. The human trial, announced in October before the recent rise in cases, is initially seeking up to 500 volunteers to be vaccinated at a hospital in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. Two doses of the vaccine will be given, 20 days apart, to volunteers, the statement said. The UAE is also conducting Phase III trials of a vaccine developed by China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm). The UAE has approved the vaccine and it is available for free to anybody who wants it, with priority given to more vulnerable individuals, according to the health ministry.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-emirates/uae-starts-trials-of-russias-sputnik-v-coronavirus-vaccine-as-cases-rise-idUKKBN29C0Sj>

CureVac teams up with Bayer to accelerate development of Covid vaccine

Germany's CureVac has teamed up with the country's largest pharmaceuticals company Bayer to accelerate the development and production of its Covid-19 vaccine. The Tübingen-based company, whose vaccine uses a similar technology to the ones developed by BioNTech and Moderna, said on Thursday it had entered into a collaboration and services agreement that would help it deliver several hundred million doses. CureVac, the oldest of the trio of companies working on messenger RNA technology to develop vaccines, was among the first to announce it was working on a product to deal with Sars-Cov-2, the virus that causes Covid-19. But it has since lagged far behind its competitors, both of which have already won authorisations in the US and EU.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a3d779b3-c8d2-4832-89c7-f992ef6a8a51>

UPDATE 1-Roche, Sanofi arthritis drugs reduce death rates among sickest COVID-19 patients

LONDON, Jan 7 (Reuters) - Treating critically ill COVID-19 patients with Roche's Actemra or Sanofi's Kevzara arthritis drugs significantly improves survival rates and reduces the amount of time patients need intensive care,

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/update-1-roche-sanofi-arthritis-drugs-reduce-death-rates-among-sickest-covid-19-patients/ar-BB1cyKH3>

Critically ill Covid-19 patients to receive new potentially life-saving drugs

Critically ill Covid-19 patients admitted to intensive care units across the UK will be able to receive new drugs that can "significantly" reduce the risk of death as well as time spent in hospital by up to 10 days. NHS patients will have access to tocilizumab and sarilumab - which are typically used to treat rheumatoid arthritis - under updated guidance due to be issued tomorrow by the Government and the NHS to Trusts across the UK. It comes after results from the Government-funded REMAP-CAP clinical trial showed that both drugs reduced the risk of mortality by 8.5% when administered to patients within a day of entering intensive care alongside a corticosteroid, such as dexamethasone.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2021-01-07/critically-ill-covid-19-patients-to-receive-new-potentially-life-saving-drugs>

Coronavirus vaccine: Expert calls China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine 'the most unsafe in the world'

Shanghai doctor Tao Lina claimed that Sinopharm's jab had 73 side effects. He described it as 'the most unsafe in the world' to his 4.8million followers. But the expert denied criticising the drug after his remarks were reported. He denounced foreign media outlets for 'twisting' and 'exploiting' his words

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9121851/Coronavirus-vaccine-Expert-calls-Chinas-Sinopharm-COVID-19-vaccine-unsafe-world.html>

Babraham Institute study of Oxford University's Covid-19 vaccine underscores importance of second dose

A study involving mice suggests the second dose of Oxford University and AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine will be particularly important to generate an effective immune response in older people. Immunologists at the Babraham Institute studied the effect of age on the immune response to the vaccine. Their findings agreed with vaccine trial data, published in The Lancet, that showed two doses are required for younger and older people to have a similar immune response. Dr Michelle Linterman, a Babraham Institute group leader and lead on the research study, said: "As we get older, our immune system function declines and we become more vulnerable to infectious disease. "The current pandemic has highlighted how much of a health imbalance this can cause. This work has allowed us to analyse the immune system response to the vaccine at cellular resolution and learn more about how age affects this."

<https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/babraham-institute-study-of-oxford-university-s-covid-19-vaccine-underscores-importance-of-second-dose-9147105/>

Covid-19: Stale air can transmit the coronavirus

A Cambridge doctor says he wants the government to do more to warn the public that infected air is a major source of transmission of Covid-19 and that ventilating rooms is just as important as washing hands. He warned that the need to open windows and ventilate indoor spaces to disperse the virus is not being publicised enough by the government when research shows eight out of ten cases are caused by breathing in infected air. And he says cloth masks offer only "minimal protection" against these tiny particles which can stay floating in the air.

<https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/covid-19-stale-air-can-transmit-the-coronavirus-9147530/>

Increased socializing may have jeopardized lockdown benefit in England

Researchers in the UK report that much of the potential beneficial impact of the November 2020 English National lockdown on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic was likely undermined in many areas due to increased socializing in the days running up to its implementation. They say that information leaked about the intended lockdown five days prior to its implementation led to increased socializing in areas that had been categorized as Tier 1 and tier 2 as part of the country's three-tier system.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20210106/Increased-socializing-may-have-jeopardized-lockdown-benefit-in-England.aspx>

Covid: New study claims five-day warning ruined last England lockdown

On September 21, the UK government's Science Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) published a document calling for a national circuit-breaker lockdown to curb the steadily increasing cases of COVID. The Sage scientists warned that "not acting now to reduce cases will result in a very large epidemic with catastrophic consequences in terms of direct COVID-related deaths and the ability of the health service to meet needs". Instead of heeding the warnings of their own scientists, the government instead solicited the fringe views of "experts" who advocated for controlling the effects of the virus with less restrictive measures, while shielding society's most vulnerable.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/uk-news/covid-new-study-claims-five-19575374>

How to mitigate the impact of a lockdown on mental health

The Covid-19 pandemic is impacting people's mental health. But what helps and hinders people in getting through a lockdown? A new study led by researchers at the University of Basel addressed this question using data from 78 countries across the world. The results hint at the pivots and hinges on which the individual's psyche rests in the pandemic. At the outset of the Covid-19 pandemic, little was known about the impact of population-wide governmental lockdowns. What was known was taken from restricted quarantines of small groups of people. "On the one hand, such drastic changes to daily routines can be detrimental to mental health," explains Professor Andrew Gloster from the University of Basel, co-leader of the study now published in PLOS One. "On the other hand, because the entire population was more or less equally affected during the lockdown, it remained unclear whether this impact would occur." To address this question, Gloster and his international colleagues conducted an online survey in 18 languages. Almost 10,000 people from 78 countries participated, giving information about their mental health and overall situation during the Covid-19 lockdown.

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2021-01/uob-htm010721.php

Sinovac's Covid-19 Vaccine Is 78% Effective in Brazil Late-Stage Trials

China's shot also gives 100% protection against severe cases of the disease, said Brazil's Butantan Institute, raising hopes that it can be widely used in the developing world.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/sinovacs-covid-19-vaccine-is-78-effective-in-brazil-late-stage-trials-11610032825>

Hang in there, Australia—we're in great shape, but we're only halfway through the COVID marathon

In the midst of the anxiety over the latest outbreaks in NSW and Victoria, it is easy to forget the wider context of Australia's privileged COVID position. Relative to most Western countries, some of which are losing someone to COVID every 60 seconds, we live in a largely COVID-free oasis. This puts us in an incredibly good position to carefully exit from the COVID crisis and manage a steady return to nationwide normality, without the suffering seen in other nations. But we have 12 months or so to go.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-australiawere-great-halfway-covid-marathon.html>

Third Covid vaccine set for UK approval next week but arrival delayed by Brexit

Covid-19: Patients urged to get vaccine as soon as they canBBC NewsAs cases spike, Europe mulls delaying 2nd coronavirus vaccine shotPOLITICO.euModerna's coronavirus vaccine likely prevents infection for 'a couple of YEARS,' CEO saysDaily MailModerna Covid vaccine approved by EUThe IndependentView Full coverage on Google News

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/jan/07/third-covid-vaccine-expected-to-be-approved-in-uk-next-week>

Covid Vaccine Made by Chinese Company Sinovac Is Said to Be Effective

Sinovac Biotech has sold more than 300 million doses to the developing world, filling a gap left by Western countries. Brazilian officials said Thursday that a coronavirus vaccine made by a Chinese company was effective, bolstering the chances of approval for a second Chinese inoculation that could be rolled out in much of the developing world. Officials in the state of São Paulo, where a prominent medical research institute carried out a large study of the vaccine made by the Beijing-based Sinovac, said the inoculation had an efficacy rate of 78 percent.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/07/business/china-coronavirus-vaccine-sinovac.html>

Coronavirus vaccine Scotland: NHS advice for pregnant women

The NHS in Scotland has published guidance surrounding the coronavirus vaccine for pregnant women. As of January 3, 113,459 people in the country have received their first dose of the jab, according to Nicola Sturgeon. However, the risks to mums-to-be are still unknown, with the vaccine

not yet been tested on pregnant women. According to NHS Inform, the vaccine is not recommended under a precautionary approach.

<https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/18994210.coronavirus-vaccine-scotland-nhs-advice-pregnant-women/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Exclusive: London will be overwhelmed by covid in a fortnight says leaked NHS England briefing

London's hospitals are less than two weeks from being overwhelmed by covid even under the 'best' case scenario, according to an official briefing given to the capital's most senior doctors this afternoon. NHS England London medical director Vin Diwakar set out the stark analysis to the medical directors of London's hospital trusts on a Zoom call. The NHS England presentation, seen by HSJ (see slides below story), showed that even if the number of covid patients grew at the lowest rate considered likely, and measures to manage demand and increase capacity, including open the capital's Nightingale hospital, were successful, the NHS in London would be short of nearly 2,000 general and acute and intensive care beds by 19 January.

<https://www.hsj.co.uk/acute-care/exclusive-london-will-be-overwhelmed-by-covid-in-a-fortnight-says-leaked-nhs-england-briefing/7029264.article>

France reports 22 cases of new COVID-19 variants, ministry says

French Health ministry said on Thursday that 22 cases of new variants of the coronavirus have been detected in France. The ministry also said in a statement that two high-risk clusters that could feature the new British variant of COVID-19 have been found in the Brittany and the Paris regions.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-france-variants/france-reports-22-cases-of-new-covid-19-variants-ministry-says-idUKKBN29C2CT>

Return to home lockdowns ruled out as Spain's COVID-19 cases soar in 'third wave'

Spain's Health Minister has ruled out any home confinements to combat the 'third wave' of the coronavirus pandemic. Salvador Illa said today (January 7) that the Madrid government is not considering a new State of Alarm decree to supersede the one imposed on October 25th to stop the fresh onslaught of Covid-19. Regional governments have the flexibility under the current State of Alarm to impose measures to reduce the spread of new infections, but they cannot bring in home confinements.

<https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2021/01/07/return-to-home-lockdowns-ruled-out-as-spains-covid-19-cases-soar-in-third-wave/>

Covid-19: Virus Hammers California as Deaths and Hospitalizations Surge

California's daily coronavirus case tallies remain around four times what they were during the state's summer surge, and officials predict that the aftereffects of a December surge linked to holiday gatherings will worsen as the winter drags on. After new infections — driven by Thanksgiving travel and gatherings, then Christmas festivities — resulted in a surge unlike any the state had yet seen, the trajectory of its new cases has leveled off somewhat in the early days of 2021. But there are more than twice as many Covid-19 patients in California hospitals now as there were a month ago, and many intensive care units in the state have been overflowing. At least six people in the state have also been found to be infected with the new, more transmissible variant of the virus first identified in Britain.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/01/04/world/covid-19-coronavirus>

Spain tightens virus curbs but rules out lockdown

Spain's regions stepped up virus restrictions this week but the government remained adamant it would not impose a lockdown despite an expected post-Christmas surge in infections, a minister said Thursday. Outgoing Health Minister Salvador Illa said the situation was causing "a great deal of

concern", warning there were "complicated weeks ahead and people must remain on high alert".

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-spain-virus-curbs-lockdown.html>

The UK can't even keep track of its spiralling Covid-19 case numbers

Ten months after the first one, the UK is back where it started: stuck a national lockdown. Since England came out of a national lockdown on December 2, the trajectory of daily confirmed cases across the UK has morphed into a near-vertical climb. Confirmed cases topped 60,000 for the first time on January 5, and a day later the daily death toll surpassed 1,000 for the first time since April. It's obvious that the virus is spreading across the UK, but the testing numbers reveal something else worrying going on. The country is reporting a higher share of positive Covid-19 tests than at any point since April, when testing was extremely limited. This suggests that the real number of people with the virus is much higher than testing currently conveys.

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/uk-covid-19-test-positivity-rate>

Japan Emergency May Last Months as Critics Say Steps Too Narrow

Restrictions set to be imposed under Japan's state of emergency could last months, with both government advisers and critics of its strategy calling for broader steps than current proposals. Japan is set to declare an emergency as early as Thursday in Tokyo and three surrounding areas, with relatively narrow restrictions focused on reducing infections at bars and restaurants. But as in spring, the declaration may drag on if those moves fail to change people's behavior, experts contend.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-06/japan-emergency-may-last-months-as-critics-say-steps-too-narrow>

Malaysia reports record jump in COVID-19 cases amid fears of new lockdown

Malaysia reported its biggest daily rise in coronavirus cases on Thursday as the government considered imposing restrictions in some areas, while businesses warned that another nationwide lockdown would further batter the economy. A jump in infections has spooked investors, with the Kuala Lumpur stock index falling as much as 1.2% on Thursday, a day after authorities said the rise in cases was straining the health system. The government was considering targeted lockdowns in parts of the country in response, Director-General of Health Noor Hisham Abdullah had said on Wednesday. The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers said that it supported a partial lockdown but that wider restrictions could cripple businesses already impacted by the pandemic

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-malaysia/malaysia-reports-record-jump-in-covid-19-cases-amid-fears-of-new-lockdown-idUKKBN29C15C>

China COVID cases at highest in five months amid Hebei outbreak

The number of new COVID-19 cases in China nearly doubled on Wednesday as more patients were confirmed with the virus in Hebei, the province surrounding Beijing, which began mass testing of the entire provincial capital and restricted travel after detecting 20 cases earlier this week. Hebei, which entered "wartime mode" on Tuesday, accounted for 51 of the 52 new locally transmitted cases reported by the National Health Commission on Thursday. State media reported that 50 of those cases were in the provincial capital, Shijiazhuang, a city of 11 million people about 300 kilometres (200 miles) south of Beijing.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/7/covid-cases-in-hebei-nearly-double-as-china-province-sealed-off>

Arizona deemed 'hot spot of the world' amid virus surge

Five months after President Donald Trump hailed Arizona as a model for how it dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic, public health experts warned Wednesday that the state has become "the hot spot of the world" and that health restrictions the governor has been hesitant to impose could have tamped down the crisis. "It's way worse than July already, and it's going to continue to get worse. We're probably two weeks behind LA in terms of our situation," Will Humble, head of the Arizona

Public Health Association, said referring to Los Angeles County, where a COVID-19 surge has created a shortage of oxygen and led ambulance crews to stop transporting patients they can't revive in the field.

<https://apnews.com/article/tucson-arizona-coronavirus-pandemic-5df2fa9a6dc1924b4fb9a910d6b38ba1>

Europe coronavirus cases surpass 25 million - Reuters tally

Coronavirus cases in Europe surpassed 25 million on Thursday, according to a Reuters tally, with several countries reinstating or extending lockdowns as a resurgence in the pandemic threatens to overwhelm health services.

https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-europe-cases-idUKKBN29C22S?taid=5ff770947bb4b5000181d8e0&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

New Lockdown

France Has Lockdown Lessons for Boris Johnson

Optimism about Covid-19 vaccines has quickly turned to pessimism about how slowly they're being rolled out — and the grim realization that stay-at-home restrictions will be with us for longer as a result. This is being felt acutely in Europe, where Brits are now in their third national lockdown, barely a month after the second one ended. Ireland has also reintroduced tougher curbs. Both countries have seen cases and hospitalizations pile up this winter.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/france-has-lockdown-lessons-for-boris-johnson/2021/01/07/3ce05140-50c8-11eb-a1f5-fdaf28cfca90_story.html

Nation of small-business owners adapts to England lockdown No 3

A year ago, yoga teacher Brenda Ward would have been dashing between hotels, gyms and schools to deliver her classes but as England entered a third national lockdown, she stepped into her living room and greeted students by video call. Having switched all her yoga and wellbeing classes online, the 53-year-old has joined a host of small-business owners finding ways to adapt and thrive despite lockdowns that have upended high streets and downed economic activity. "I'm probably busier (than before the pandemic)," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone from her home-turned-studio in northwest England.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-smallbiz/nation-of-small-business-owners-adapts-to-england-lockdown-no-3-idUKL8N2JH3XY>