

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

1st Apr 2022

Lockdown Exit

States Close Mass Test and Vaccine Sites, but Virus May Swell Anew

As Americans shed masks and return to offices and restaurants, local and state officials are scaling back the most visible public health efforts to address the coronavirus pandemic. States like Illinois are shuttering free Covid-19 testing sites after nearly two years of operation. Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and Ohio have stopped releasing daily data on virus hospitalizations, infections and deaths. And, perhaps most notably, some places are diminishing their campaigns to vaccinate residents even as federal authorities announced on Tuesday that people 50 and older could get a second booster shot. The slowing of state and local efforts comes as the virus in the United States appears, at least for now, to be in retreat, with cases falling swiftly in recent weeks. But the cutbacks also arrive at a moment when a more transmissible version of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, known as BA.2, is spreading through Europe, Asia and is now the dominant version of new virus cases in the United States. New coronavirus infections are edging upward once again in several states, including New York.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/30/us/covid-vaccine-testing-states.html>

COVID-19: How can I get lateral flow tests from Friday and how much do they cost?

In England, the majority of people who want to be tested for COVID-19 will have to pay for their own lateral flow tests from this Friday under new plans put forward by ministers. The government has announced who will be eligible for free tests when free universal testing in England comes to an end. People have been discouraged from ordering packs of lateral flow tests (LFTs) from the government website in a last-minute scramble to get hold of them by 1 April.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-how-can-i-get-lateral-flow-tests-from-friday-and-how-much-do-they-cost-12578233>

U.S. CDC scraps COVID warning for cruise travel after 2 years

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Wednesday removed its COVID-19 notice against cruise travel, around two years after introducing a warning scale showing the level of coronavirus transmission risk on cruise ships. The move offers a shot of hope to major U.S. cruise operators such as Carnival, Royal Caribbean and Norwegian Cruise that have struggled to bring in revenue since the pandemic started.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-cdc-eliminates-warnings-against-cruise-travel-2022-03-30/>

S.Koreans flock overseas for 'revenge travel' as COVID rules ease

Vaccinated and boosted, Kim and his wife are among South Koreans joining in a rush for "revenge travel" - a term that has been trending on social media as people scramble to book overseas trips that were delayed by coronavirus restrictions. The boom started after March 21 when South Korea lifted a seven-day mandatory quarantine for fully vaccinated travellers arriving from most countries. The restriction had been eased last year but was reimposed in December as the highly infectious Omicron variant spread.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/skoreans-flock-overseas-revenge-travel-covid-rules-ease-2022-03-31/>

China reopens one city as Shanghai lockdown enters 2nd phase

The city of Shanghai prepared Thursday to reopen its eastern half and shut its western half, while authorities elsewhere announced the lifting of a citywide lockdown in the province hit hardest by

China's ongoing omicron-driven coronavirus outbreak. Residents of the city of Jilin will be able to move about freely starting Friday for the first time in more than three weeks, state broadcaster CCTV said, citing a notice issued by the city. They will be required to wear masks and, when indoors, stay one meter (three feet) apart. Public gatherings in parks and squares are prohibited.

<https://apnews.com/article/covid-business-health-china-shanghai-ef1a875b77200fb005b10aaa1fac0c0b>

U.S. Senate negotiators near agreement on \$10 bln round of COVID funds

U.S. Senate negotiators on Thursday were nearing a deal on a \$10 billion COVID-19 bill to help the federal government acquire more vaccines and medical supplies as it prepares for future variants of the virus that upended American life. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, said senators were "close to a final agreement" on a bill aiming to shore up stockpiles to be used both domestically and internationally. If a deal is finalized in coming days, the Senate might be able to pass the bill and send it to the House of Representatives before the start of a spring recess at the end of next week.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-senate-negotiators-near-agreement-10-bln-round-covid-funds-2022-03-31/>

Shanghai to expand lockdown to most residents as COVID cases rise

Shanghai is set to put the vast majority of its residents under COVID lockdown from Friday, as it expands curbs to include the western half of the city and extends restrictions in the east where people have already been forced to stay home since Monday. The Chinese commercial hub, home to 26 million people, is on the fourth day of a 10-day lockdown that was to cover the city in two phases, with first the east and then the west entering lockdowns of five days each. The stay-at-home measure in the financial and industrial districts in the east began on Monday and was due to be lifted at 5 a.m. on Friday. However, the city government late on Thursday said it would lift the curbs in stages instead.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/shanghai-urges-covid-lockdown-patience-case-numbers-drop-first-time-2-weeks-2022-03-31/>

Unreported Covid Infections, Deaths Plague a Shanghai Hospital for the Elderly

Many patients have died in recent days at a large Shanghai elderly-care hospital that is battling a Covid-19 outbreak, according to people familiar with the situation, a sign that a new wave of infections is hitting China's financial capital harder than authorities have publicly disclosed. Shanghai's government hasn't reported any Covid-related deaths or outbreaks in its hundreds of elderly-care centers since cases began climbing in the city in March. Six replacement orderlies at the city's Donghai Elderly Care Hospital, brought in after previous caretakers were sent away to quarantine, told The Wall Street Journal that they had witnessed or heard of the recent removal of several bodies from the facility, where they said at least 100 patients had tested positive for Covid-19.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/unreported-covid-infections-deaths-plague-a-shanghai-hospital-for-the-elderly-11648734696>

Exit Strategies

Health Ministry provides coronavirus vaccine to refugees using UNHCR certificate

In Egypt, the Ministry of Health and Population announced that they will provide the coronavirus vaccines to refugees and asylum seekers through medical teams without registering on the ministry's website, pointing out that the vaccination can be obtained with a passport or a UNHCR certificate. The ministry pointed out, in an official statement, that coronavirus vaccines were available at several metro stations. The Ministry added it targets vaccinating 70 percent of citizens by the end of June to reach herd immunity, so that coronavirus precautionary measures could be eased.

<https://egyptindependent.com/health-ministry-provides-coronavirus-vaccine-to-refugees-using-unhcr-certificate/>

Groups urge Biden to reject potential WTO 'concept' on COVID-19 vaccine barriers

Doctors without Borders, Oxfam America, Amnesty International and other top civil society groups on Wednesday urged US President Joe Biden to reject a potential deal on COVID-19 vaccine intellectual property rights at the World Trade Organization. In a letter, the groups called the proposal a "rehash" of a European Union position that fell far short of the rights waiver Biden backed in May 2021 to speed vaccines to developing countries.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/groups-urge-biden-reject-potential-wto-concept-covid-19-vaccine-barriers-2022-03-30/>

Biden gets second booster shot, pushes for more COVID funding

U.S. President Joe Biden rolled up his sleeve for a second COVID-19 booster shot on Wednesday as his administration rolled out efforts to help Americans live with the coronavirus, including a new website and a renewed push for vaccinations and funding. "If we fail to invest, we leave ourselves vulnerable if another wave hits," Biden said in remarks at the White House to launch COVID.gov, a clearinghouse of information aimed at helping people manage the virus as they seek a return to normalcy.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/white-house-launches-covidgov-amid-push-more-funds-booster-shots-2022-03-30/>

German panel recommends booster for recipients of 4 vaccines

Germany's independent vaccination advisory panel is recommending a booster shot with a messenger RNA vaccine for people who have had a full course of four Chinese, Indian and Russian COVID-19 vaccines that aren't currently approved for use in the European Union. In a draft recommendation Thursday, the panel, known by its German acronym STIKO, said the advice applies to people given a full course and also a booster of the Chinese Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines, the Indian-made Covaxin and Russia's Sputnik V.

<https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-covid-health-business-germany-70cff436588327eb89c603e0d1b6fb5c>

Germany plans to relax COVID quarantine rules as cases soar

Germany plans to end mandatory quarantine for most people who catch COVID-19, the health ministry proposed on Thursday, as numbers isolating with the infection top four million. Under the existing rules, people with COVID must quarantine for at least seven days. But Health Minister Karl Lauterbach wants to change that to a voluntary five days of self-isolation with the recommendation of a COVID test at the end of that period, proposals seen by Reuters showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-plans-relax-covid-quarantine-rules-cases-soar-2022-03-31/>

Shanghai reports 4144 new asymptomatic, 358 new symptomatic COVID cases for March 31

China's financial hub of Shanghai reported 4,144 asymptomatic COVID-19 cases and 358 symptomatic cases for March 31, the city government said on its official WeChat account on Friday. That compared with 5,298 new asymptomatic cases and 355 new cases with symptoms reported a day earlier. Shanghai put the vast majority of its residents under COVID lockdown from Friday, as it expanded curbs to include the western half of the city and extended restrictions in the east where people have already been forced to stay home since Monday

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/shanghai-reports-4144-new-asymptomatic-358-new-symptomatic-covid-cases-march-31-2022-04-01/>

China's Covid-Zero Strategy: What Could Xi Jinping Do Next?

China's Covid Zero strategy has been drastic and effective, saving lives and keeping the economy on track. But a new wave of virus cases is highlighting the growing costs of that approach - as well as the perils of any attempt to change it. Authorities are fighting to curb the spread of the omicron variant among a population that lacks natural immunity and only has access to home-grown vaccines that are less effective than some of the global alternatives. Shanghai - the country's

financial center – is locking down just weeks after the technology hub of Shenzhen was forced to do so.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2022-03-31/china-s-covid-zero-strategy-what-could-xi-jinping-do-next>

Continued Lockdown

Shanghai urges COVID lockdown patience as case numbers drop for first time in 2 weeks

Volkswagen on Thursday said it would halt work at its factory in Shanghai between April 1-5, reversing an earlier plan to maintain some of its production, as the city extends a lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19. The German automaker, which has a Shanghai joint venture with SAIC Motor, said it would carry out maintenance work in the factory. Volkswagen earlier in the day said it would maintain some production over the period by providing accommodations and meals at its factory for employees volunteering to work.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/volkswagen-suspends-shanghai-production-amid-covid-lockdown-2022-03-31/>

Volkswagen suspends Shanghai production amid COVID lockdown

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<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/volkswagen-suspends-shanghai-production-amid-covid-lockdown-2022-03-31/>

Shanghai residents rush to stock up as second stage of COVID lockdown looms

Shanghai is set to put the vast majority of its residents under COVID lockdown from Friday, as it expands curbs to include the western half of the city and extends restrictions in the east where people have already been forced to stay home since Monday. The Chinese commercial hub, home to 26 million people, is on the fourth day of a 10-day lockdown that was to cover the city in two phases, with first the east and then the west entering lockdowns of five days each. The stay-at-home measure in the financial and industrial districts in the east began on Monday and was due to be lifted at 5 a.m. on Friday.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/shanghai-urges-covid-lockdown-patience-case-numbers-drop-first-time-2-weeks-2022-03-31/>

Scientific Viewpoint

FDA grants Pfizer/BioNTech expanded EUA for an additional COVID-19 vaccine booster

Pfizer/BioNTech have been given an expanded emergency use authorisation (EUA) by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for its COVID-19 vaccine. This allows the vaccine to be given to adults ages 50 years and older as a second booster. Eligible adults can have had any authorised COVID-19 vaccine as their first booster. A second booster dose has also been authorised for those aged 12 years and older who are immunocompromised, and have had a first booster dose of any authorised COVID-19 vaccine. The second booster should be given at least four months after the initial booster and could potentially restore antibody levels and improve protection in older people. It is the same formulation and strength as previous Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine doses. The companies' vaccine already has EUA authorisation for use as a single booster for those aged 12 and older who have already had two doses of the vaccine. Those aged 18 and older could have received any approved COVID-19 vaccines for their initial two doses.

https://www.pmlive.com/pharma_news/fda_grants_pfizerbiontech_expanded_eua_for_an_additional_covid-19_vaccine_booster_1389641

CureVac and GSK try again with COVID-19 vaccine -

CureVac and GlaxoSmithKline's first attempt to develop a COVID-19 vaccine was a salutary reminder of the pitfalls in drug development, as the mRNA shot crashed and burned in a clinical trial last year, but they aren't giving up. The first participants have been dosed in a new, second generation version - dubbed CV2CoV - which uses a different mRNA backbone and will be a key test of CureVac's new vaccine design approach. When the first generation vaccine CVnCoV failed its phase 2b/3 test last summer, the writing looked to be on the wall for the alliance, with multiple COVID-19 shots already available with more coming down the pipeline - including GSK and Sanofi's recombinant protein candidate - and prospects looking slim in an increasingly crowded market. CureVac and GSK are banking on continued, long-term demand for SARS-CoV-2 shots as boosters as COVID-19 shifts from a pandemic to an endemic disease, with regular shots to control infections like flu.

<https://pharmaphorum.com/news/curevac-and-gsk-try-again-with-covid-19-vaccine/>

'This massive undertaking was invisible': film glimpses behind the curtain as Covid vaccine was made

How to Survive a Pandemic, investigative journalist and director David France's documentary on the road to developing, producing and inequitably distributing several Covid-19 vaccines, begins on the day vaccines went from murky future to clear horizon. The film opens in December 2020, in the remarkably bespoke basement of the US Food and Drug Administration's Dr Peter Marks. The room is decked in Mardi Gras beads and a teddy bear; Marks's clunky work laptop is surrounded by cans of oats. On camera and on the phone with Gen Gustavo Perna, the chief operating officer of the federal Covid-19 response for vaccine and therapeutics, Marks celebrates the FDA's emergency use authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. "Sorry you had to deal with all that political crap," says Perna. "Vaccines will be moving tomorrow."

<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2022/mar/30/david-france-covid-how-to-survive-a-pandemic-film-hbo>

Rokote Laboratories selects Exothera for GMP manufacturing of its second-generation coronavirus vaccine FINCoVac 2.0.

Rokote Laboratories Finland Ltd., a vaccine development company focussing on a second-generation COVID-19 vaccine, and Exothera S.A. will collaborate to bring the intranasal coronavirus vaccine FINCoVac 2.0 to clinical Phase I/II trials. Exothera will finetune the industrialization of the FINCOVAC 2.0 process and manufacture clinical material for Phase I/II trials. FINCoVac 2.0 is designed to address the most critical current coronavirus variants and it is based on adenoviral vector gene transfer technology. The FINCoVac vaccine is designed to program the nasopharyngeal cells to produce an immune response-inducing modified SARS-CoV-2-viral spike protein. FINCoVac 2.0 represents an easy-to-administer booster for those who are already fully vaccinated with other coronavirus vaccines.

<https://www.biospace.com/article/releases/rokote-laboratories-selects-exothera-for-gmp-manufacturing-of-its-second-generation-coronavirus-vaccine-fincovac-2-0-/>

Novavax asks EU to approve coronavirus vaccine for adolescents

Novavax has submitted a request Thursday to expand the authorization of its coronavirus vaccine to adolescents in the EU. The vaccine, which was approved for use in adults in the EU in December, was the first protein-based COVID-19 jab to be authorized in the bloc. In a statement Thursday, Novavax said it had submitted a request to the European Medicines Agency to expand the conditional marketing authorization of their vaccine, called Nuvaxovid, to young people aged between 12 and 17. "We are continuing to see spikes in COVID-19 across Europe and recognize the need to improve vaccination rates, particularly in the pediatric population," said Stanley C. Erck, Novavax's CEO. "We look forward to a decision from the European Medicines Agency and firmly believe in the benefit of diversified vaccine options." The request includes data from an ongoing trial

of the jab in teenagers in the U.S., which the drugmaker said demonstrated 80 percent efficacy at a time when the Delta variant was the dominant strain in the U.S.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/novavax-eu-approve-coronavirus-vaccine-adolescents/>

Ivermectin ineffective at preventing COVID-19 in new, large study

A study published on Wednesday found the use of ivermectin to combat COVID-19 did not lead to reduced hospitalization. In Brazil, 3,515 people participated in a study where a group received ivermectin, a group received a placebo and another group received a different form of treatment for COVID-19. The study, posted in The New England Journal of Medicine, says the results concluded ivermectin does not lower the risk of COVID-19 hospitalization. "Treatment with ivermectin did not result in a lower incidence of medical admission to a hospital due to progression of Covid-19 or of prolonged emergency department observation among outpatients with an early diagnosis of Covid-19," the study states.

<https://thehill.com/policy/3012080-ivermectin-ineffective-at-preventing-covid-19-in-new-large-study/>

NIH begins clinical trial evaluating second COVID-19 booster shots in adults

A Phase 2 clinical trial evaluating various additional COVID-19 booster shots has begun enrolling adult participants in the United States. The trial aims to understand if different vaccine regimens—prototype and variant vaccines alone and in combinations—can broaden immune responses in adults who already have received a primary vaccination series and a first booster shot. The study, known as the COVID-19 Variant Immunologic Landscape (COVAIL) trial, is sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health.

<https://www.eurekalert.org/news-releases/948289>

FDA places full clinical hold on CytoDyn's Covid-19 programme

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has placed a complete clinical hold on CytoDyn's Covid-19 programme in the country. With the full clinical hold in place, the company will not launch any new clinical trials until the regulatory agency lifts the hold. At present, CytoDyn is not carrying out any Covid-19 trials in the US, as the company is analysing the most ideal programmes to invest its resources and focus. A clinical stage biotechnology company, CytoDyn is analysing its Ieronlimab, an investigational humanised IgG4 monoclonal antibody, for its potential in various treatment areas, including infectious disease, cancer and autoimmune conditions.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/fda-hold-cytodyn-covid/>

Covid-19: Lockdowns spread in China as omicron tests "zero covid" strategy

The force of the omicron BA.2 variant this week met the immovable object that is China's zero covid policy as Shanghai locked down amid the country's worst outbreak since early 2020. World oil prices fell and Indian drug manufacturers warned of ingredient shortages as the city responsible for 4% of China's gross domestic product posted record case numbers on 30 March. About 9 million residents of Pudong, the eastern half of Shanghai, have been locked down since 28 March. Bridges across the Huangpu River are closed. On the other bank, roughly 15 million people in the west of the city, centred around Puxi, were to begin a lockdown on 1 April as Pudong reopened. But many western districts were locked down two days early as city authorities released figures showing a continued steep rise in cases. In Puxi, a robot patrolled the streets, announcing the new schedule. In Pudong, residents were warned that drones with facial recognition technology would identify those illegally outdoors. A new lockdown was also imposed on 30 March in Xuzhou, a city of three million in Jiangsu province.

<https://www.bmj.com/content/376/bmj.o859>

Covid-19 news: Omicron's reinfection risk 10 times higher than delta's

In the UK, the risk of being reinfected with SARS-CoV-2 virus is 10 times higher with omicron than

delta. The Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Covid-19 Infection Survey estimates the number of reinfections that occurred in the UK between July 2020 and 20 March 2022. From 20 December 2021 to 20 March 2022, when omicron was the dominant variant, the risk of reinfection was about 10 times greater than when delta dominated, defined as mid-May 2021 to 19 December. Reinfection definitions vary. The ONS defines it as a positive PCR test result after a number of negative results, following an initial infection. The specific number of negative results required between infections depends on when the reinfection occurred, as definitions have changed over time. Covid-19 immunity, whether naturally acquired or via vaccines, wanes over time, leaving people more vulnerable to reinfection. Omicron has also evolved to better evade immunity.

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2237475-covid-19-news-omicrons-reinfection-risk-10-times-higher-than-deltas/>

EMA starts review of Sanofi-GSK COVID vaccine application

The European Union's drug regulator has started reviewing Sanofi and its British partner GlaxoSmithKline's application seeking conditional authorization for their COVID-19 vaccine, the agency said on Wednesday. The drugmakers had earlier said that they would seek regulatory approval for their COVID-19 vaccine to be used as a booster as well as a standalone two-dose shot. In support of the companies' application, the final data package comprising a late-stage trial of the vaccine and another trial testing it as a booster was submitted to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) on March 29, the drugmakers said in an email to Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ema-starts-review-sanofi-gsk-covid-vaccine-application-2022-03-30/>

Pfizer/BioNTech COVID vaccine slashes pediatric hospitalization risk -U.S. study

Children ages 5 to 11 who received the Pfizer, BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine were 68% less likely to be hospitalized during the Omicron wave in the United States than unvaccinated children, according to a study published on Wednesday. Adolescents aged 12-18 who received two shots of the vaccine were around 40% less likely to be hospitalized with the Omicron variant of the virus, the study led by scientists from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Boston Children's Hospital found. It was published in the New England Journal of Medicine. The risk of more serious outcomes, including need for mechanical breathing assistance or death, was nearly 80% lower for those who received the shots in that age group.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizerbiontech-covid-vaccine-slashes-pediatric-hospitalization-risk-us-study-2022-03-30/>

WHO says most likely scenario shows COVID severity will decrease over time

The World Health Organization on Wednesday released an updated plan for COVID-19, laying out three possible scenarios for how the pandemic will evolve this year. "Based on what we know now, the most likely scenario is that the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve, but the severity of disease it causes reduces over time as immunity increases due to vaccination and infection," Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said during a briefing. However, the WHO head cautioned that periodic spikes in cases and deaths may occur as immunity wanes, which may require periodic boosting for vulnerable populations.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/whos-tedros-says-most-likely-scenario-covid-severity-will-reduce-over-time-2022-03-30/>

Analysis: Governments want COVID vaccine developers to aim higher in hunt for better shots

As governments prepare to live with COVID-19, some are questioning how much to rely on drugmakers to adapt vaccines to ward off future virus variants amid signs of tension between companies and regulators over the best approach, according to several sources familiar with the matter. Some vaccine experts say government agencies should fund and help develop a new generation of COVID shots, and seek innovation from smaller developers, as they did to identify

current vaccines. "We have established a research infrastructure that could do this relatively reasonably rapidly if we primed the pump and created the same kind of plan for second-generation vaccines as we did for the first-generation vaccines," Dr. Larry Corey, a virologist who is overseeing U.S. government-backed COVID vaccine trials, told Reuters.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/governments-want-covid-vaccine-developers-aim-higher-hunt-better-shots-2022-03-31/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid pandemic will remain 'unpredictable' for up to two years, says Jenny Harries

The Covid pandemic is likely to remain "unpredictable" for the next 18 months to two years, Dr Jenny Harries, chief executive of the UK Health Security Agency has said. Britain must learn to "come to terms" with the virus in a similar way to flu, with an annual booster vaccination programme "not an unreasonable position to reach", Dr Harries said. Around three and a half million people had Covid in England in the week up to March 25 as infections rose to their second highest level ever, with the BA.2 variant continuing to spread.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/covid-pandemic-remain-unpredictable-two-years-1549272>

About one-third of COVID-19 cases in Western Australia aged under 18, as 9,727 new infections recorded

Western Australia's COVID-19 cases are still yet to reach their expected peak, with new figures revealing about one-third of last week's infections occurred in children aged under 18. COVID-19 hospitalisations and ICU admissions remain steady in WA, with the state still yet to break the 10,000 new daily cases mark. It comes after restrictions were eased today, reducing capacity limits and the number of venues where check-ins are required. As of 8pm last night, there were 219 people in hospital, up from 208 yesterday, and seven in intensive care.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-31/about-one-third-of-wa-covid-19-cases-aged-under-18-figures-show/100954276>

They were Covid-19 success stories -- then they saw massive outbreaks. These charts show what's really going on

Millions of people in China are under lockdown. Hong Kong morgues are overwhelmed. And South Korea is reporting the most cases per capita worldwide. For much of the pandemic, these places were held up as Covid-19 success stories, as stringent border rules helped them avoid high cases and deaths -- even as the pandemic took hold around the world. Now, they're among a number of places across Asia Pacific battling unprecedented outbreaks. While the surge in cases can partly be explained by the highly contagious Omicron variant breaking through the region's defenses, that's not the whole story. In some places, rising case numbers are a symptom of living with Covid as governments accept that trying to eradicate the virus is an unrealistic pursuit. In other places, skyrocketing cases are being blamed on a lack of planning by authorities caught off guard, despite two years of warning.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/30/asia/covid-case-asia-data-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>

A Covid-19 spike like the one in China is unlikely in the US, experts say. Here's why

The Omicron coronavirus variant may be reaching around the world, but different places are seeing significantly different effects. In the United States, Covid-19 case numbers have been falling since January. They may have hit a plateau as a subvariant of Omicron, BA.2, becomes the main cause of infections. But in China, an area of the world that has had few spikes during the pandemic, there has been a dramatic increase in cases as BA.2 rips through the country. The difference, experts say, is part policy and part population-level immunity. What's happening in China doesn't necessarily mean the US is in for another huge spike in cases.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/31/health/covid-19-china-us-different/index.html>

China reports 1839 new COVID cases for March 30 vs 1629 a day earlier

China reported 1,839 confirmed coronavirus cases for March 30, the national health authority said on Thursday, compared with 1,629 a day earlier. Of the new cases, 1,803 were locally transmitted, the National Health Commission said, versus 1,565 a day earlier. The number of new asymptomatic cases, which China does not classify as confirmed cases, stood at 6,720 compared with 7,196 a day earlier. There were no new deaths, leaving the death toll at 4,638. As of March 30, mainland China had confirmed 149,276 cases.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-reports-1839-new-covid-cases-march-30-vs-1629-day-earlier-2022-03-31/>

Hong Kong reports 6646 new coronavirus infections

Hong Kong reported 6,646 new coronavirus infections on Thursday, down from 6,981 the previous day, and 119 deaths as daily infections continue to decline in the global financial hub, which is gradually easing restrictions.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-reports-6646-new-coronavirus-infections-2022-03-31/>

Canada faces rising COVID wave as restrictions ease

Much of Canada is facing a fresh COVID-19 wave just as authorities ease measures meant to curb the spread of the virus, emboldened by a brief drop in cases and relatively high vaccination rates. Public health experts are urging caution as COVID-19 levels in wastewater rise. Political analysts say looming elections in Ontario and Quebec, the most populous of Canada's 10 provinces, could deter politicians from reinstating pandemic health measures. Meanwhile, less testing is making it hard for individuals to do the personal risk assessments politicians are urging.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/canada-faces-rising-covid-wave-restrictions-ease-2022-03-30/>

Global COVID cases ebb amid testing blind-spot worries

The world's COVID-19 cases dropped 14% last week, compared to the week before, with decreases seen across all of the WHO's regions. However, deaths rose 45%, primarily due to changes in how some countries define COVID deaths and retrospective adjustments from others. Overall, about 10 million cases were reported to the WHO last week. The five countries reporting the most cases were South Korea, Germany, Vietnam, France, and Italy. The WHO noted that recent case rises earlier this month occurred despite reduced testing in many countries, which it says is a sign that the virus is still circulating at very high levels. It warned that a decline in testing could lead to less robust data that makes it harder to track the virus and how it is spreading and evolving. The situation could impair how quickly countries can respond with targeted control measures to reduce hospitalizations and deaths. In its weekly report, the WHO said the Omicron variant makes up 99.5% of sequenced samples. Officials added that they're monitoring recombinant viruses, including a BA.1-BA.2 version that was first observed in the United Kingdom and appears to be about 10% more transmissible than the Omicron's BA.2 subvariant.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2022/03/global-covid-cases-ebb-amid-testing-blind-spot-worries>