

COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

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Lockdown Exit

White House readies roadmap for future COVID outbreaks, seeks funding

Top U.S. health officials on Wednesday laid out a national blueprint to manage COVID-19 going forward, vowing to prepare for any new variant outbreaks without shutting down schools and businesses and calling for additional funding from Congress. The plan will help "move America from crisis to a time when COVID-19 does not disrupt our daily lives," the White House said, one day after President Joe Biden acknowledged the nation's fight against the coronavirus had entered a new phase. "We must be prepared to respond to a new variant quickly and keep our schools and businesses open," the updated National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan said, citing a need to maintain vaccines and booster shots, treatments, tests and masks.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-administration-prepares-covid-roadmap-outbreaks-2022-03-02/>

Biden's Address Cites New, Calmer Phase in Fight Against Covid-19

President Joe Biden signaled a shift to a new phase of the Covid-19 pandemic in his State of the Union address, arguing that it is time for Americans to return to normal life. "Thanks to the progress we have made this past year, Covid-19 need no longer control our lives," Biden said. The president called for Americans to return to their offices, and said that the government would allow easier access to Pfizer's Covid-19 antiviral pill, and send more free Covid-19 rapid antigen tests to Americans in their homes. "It's time for Americans to get back to work and fill our great downtowns again," Biden said. "People working from home can feel safe to begin to return to the office.

<https://www.barrons.com/articles/bidens-sotu-address-covid-19-antiviral-51646230766>

Americans can order another round of free at-home Covid-19 tests next week

Americans can order additional free at-home Covid-19 tests supplied by the US government starting next week. "If you already ordered free tests, tonight, I'm announcing you can order another group of tests. Go to Covidtest.gov starting next week and you can get more tests," President Joe Biden said during his Tuesday State of the Union address. In January, the government launched its effort to provide free rapid antigen tests to any household that requested them through that website or by calling 800-232-0233. There was a limit of four tests per residential address.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/01/politics/free-at-home-covid-tests-us-order-more/index.html>

Two years after world's biggest lockdown, India surges back to normal life

Almost two years after India went into the world's biggest lockdown to slow the spread of COVID-19, students headed back to school in Maharashtra state on Wednesday, a sign of normal life resuming as infection rates fall. India's daily coronavirus infections rose by less than 10,000 for a third straight day on Wednesday, a level last seen in late December before the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, data from the health ministry showed.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/two-years-after-worlds-biggest-lockdown-india-surges-back-normal-life-2022-03-02/>

Hong Kong Virus Fight Went From Confidence to Reliance on China

Throughout the pandemic, the government has prominently displayed slogans at Lam's news briefings to signal her government's evolving Covid approach. But the sometimes awkward tag lines -- such as vowing to fight "the aggravating virus" -- have prompted ridicule. They've also provided a record of Hong Kong's rocky path from early outbreak site to global safe haven to a place with one

of the highest Covid death rates in the developed world. From an early promise to battle “the virus with confidence” against a backdrop of blue skies, to trumpeting goals to “resume travel” and achieve “vaccination for all” that were never met, the slogans have recently grown more defensive.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-02/hong-kong-virus-fight-went-from-confidence-to-reliance-on-china?utm_source=google&utm_medium=bd&cmpid=google

Biden outlines COVID plans, says it's time to return to work

It's time for America to stop letting the coronavirus “dictate how we live,” President Joe Biden's White House declared Wednesday, outlining a strategy to allow people to return to many normal activities safely after two years of pandemic disruptions. One highlight is a new “test to treat” plan to provide free antiviral pills at pharmacies to people who test positive for the virus. The 90-page National COVID-19 Preparedness Plan spells out initiatives and investments to continue to drive down serious illness and deaths from the virus, while preparing for potential new variants and providing employers and schools the resources to remain open. “We know how to keep our businesses and our schools open with the tools that we have at our disposal,” said White House COVID-19 coordinator Jeff Zients.

<https://apnews.com/article/state-of-the-union-address-joe-biden-coronavirus-pandemic-health-9605030bcc5997a61b56c17708aeb284>

Pfizer to provide 10 mln courses of COVID pill to developing countries -the Global Fund

Pfizer Inc is expected to provide around 10 million courses of its highly effective COVID-19 antiviral treatment Paxlovid to low- and middle-income countries this year, according to an official with the Global Fund, a healthcare NGO working to buy the pills from the drugmaker. The Fund's head of strategy for policy, Harley Feldbaum, said Pfizer had committed to at least that many doses and could increase shipments later if organizations involved show they are able to distribute the pills well, noting most will be available toward the end of the year.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/pfizer-provide-10-mln-courses-covid-pill-developing-countries-the-global-fund-2022-03-02/>

Exit Strategies

UK's bilateral donation of 1 million vaccine doses will reinforce Bangladesh's fight against COVID-19

The UK bilaterally donated 1 million doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine to Bangladesh. The vaccine consignment arrived in Bangladesh on 23 February 2022. This bilateral donation from the UK will reinforce Bangladesh's fight against the coronavirus pandemic and the country's economic recovery.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20220302/UKs-bilateral-donation-of-1-million-vaccine-doses-will-reinforce-Bangladesh28099s-fight-against-COVID-19.aspx>

Hawaii to lift COVID-19 travel quarantine rules this month

Hawaii plans to lift its COVID-19 quarantine requirement for travelers this month, meaning that starting on March 26 those arriving from other places in the U.S. won't have to show proof of vaccination or a negative test to avoid sequestering themselves for five days. Hawaii is the only U.S. state to implement a coronavirus quarantine program of this kind. Gov. David Ige said at a news conference the requirement saved lives and was a major factor in limiting the spread of COVID-19 in the islands. Hawaii has one of the lowest coronavirus infection rates in the nation.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/hawaii-to-lift-covid-19-travel-quarantine-rules-this-month/>

Ontario judge declines to impose COVID-19 vaccines on children

An Ontario judge says he is not prepared to accept as fact that vaccinating children against COVID-19 is what's best for them simply because it's encouraged by the government, noting a

number of factors – including the children’s own preferences – must be taken into account. In a decision issued last week, Superior Court Justice Alex Pazaratz rejected a father’s motion to have his two younger children – ages 12 and 10 – vaccinated despite their mother’s and their own objections, and cautioned against dismissing certain viewpoints without evidence.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8653214/ontario-judge-covid-vaccines-children/>

White House will roll out next phase of Covid-19 response Wednesday

The White House will roll out a new strategy laying out the next phase of its response to the coronavirus pandemic on Wednesday, two administration officials told CNN, outlining a vision that involves fewer disruptions to daily life while preparing for the unpredictable potential of another game-changing variant. The White House's coronavirus response team and the administration's leading health officials will announce the "National Covid-19 Preparedness Plan" during an event on Wednesday, the officials said.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/01/politics/biden-next-phase-covid-response/index.html>

WA records 1,766 new local COVID-19 cases as state prepares to lift hard border and reopen

The day before Western Australia reopens to the world, the state has recorded 1,766 new local cases of COVID-19, with the hospital system put on red alert and Premier Mark McGowan announcing a \$72 million support package for affected businesses. Another four cases were found in travellers, bringing the total number of new infections to 1,770.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-02/wa-records-1766-new-local-covid-19-cases-day-before-reopening/100874570>

COVID-19 hospitalizations, cases and deaths start to plateau as provinces lift measures

The decline of COVID-19 cases, deaths and hospitalizations across Canada has led many provinces to aggressively lift public health restrictions — yet data shows those declines have begun to plateau. Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba ended several measures on Tuesday, including vaccination requirements for businesses and capacity limits. Other provinces, including Quebec, and Atlantic Canada, eased restrictions a day earlier, with Saskatchewan ending them entirely on Monday.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8653458/covid-canada-measures-plateau-omicron/>

Covid-19 mandates lifted even as cases climb

Numerous states and countries have begun lifting Covid-19 mandates even though there are more deaths due to the virus now than there were during the majority of the pandemic. For the past month, there have been more than 2,000 Covid-19 related deaths a day in the US reported, which has been the highest count since the first winter Covid-19 surge before vaccines were available. At present, Covid is attributed to 20% of all deaths worldwide. The demographics have now changed to younger and unvaccinated individuals dying, compared with older individuals who accounted for most of the casualties before vaccines were available.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/comment/covid-19-mandates-lifted-cases-climb/>

India's output, exports of Russia's Sputnik vaccine at risk due to Ukraine crisis

India's production and exports of Russia's Sputnik COVID-19 vaccines are expected to slow further following U.S. sanctions on Russia's sovereign wealth fund that promotes the shot globally, three Indian pharmaceutical industry sources told Reuters. The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) had billed India as one of Sputnik's biggest production hubs and markets, though local sales have stagnated at 1.2 million doses out of 1.8 billion doses of various vaccines administered in the country.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/indias-output-exports-russias-sputnik-vaccine-risk-due-ukraine-crisis-2022-03-02/>

Biden announces new COVID initiative that gives Americans free pills

U.S. President Joe Biden on Tuesday said his administration has launched a new initiative that will allow Americans to get tested for COVID-19 at a pharmacy and immediately receive free pills if they test positive. "We're launching the "Test to Treat" initiative so people can get tested at a pharmacy, and if they're positive, receive antiviral pills on the spot, at no cost," Biden said during his State of the Union speech.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/biden-announces-new-covid-initiative-that-gives-americans-free-pills-2022-03-02/>

Germany pledges more funds for COVID vaccines in poor countries

Germany will provide a further \$1.5 billion to a global initiative for better access to coronavirus vaccines for poorer countries, Finance Minister Christian Lindner said on Tuesday. "The global COVID-19 pandemic has not been overcome," Lindner told reporters after a virtual meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors from the Group of Seven leading economies. Germany would also provide an additional 224 million euros for logistics on the ground, or "in-country delivery costs", Lindner said.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-pledges-more-funds-covid-vaccines-poor-countries-2022-03-01/>

White House to unveil COVID preparedness plan on Wednesday

The Biden administration will announce on Wednesday a national preparedness plan for COVID-19, mapping out how "to move forward safely and get back to our more normal routines," the White House said in a statement. To be unveiled by top White House COVID-19 advisers including Dr. Anthony Fauci, the plan comes as coronavirus infections decline in the United States and masking and social distancing guidelines are eased.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/white-house-unveil-covid-19-preparedness-plan-wednesday-2022-03-02/>

Britain revokes mandatory COVID shots for health workers

Britain confirmed that a requirement for health workers to have a COVID-19 vaccination would no longer be introduced in April and care home workers would no longer be required to have the shots from March 15. Health minister Sajid Javid in January said that the government intended to revoke the regulations, subject to consultation. On Tuesday the health ministry said that following the consultation, the requirement would be dropped.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-revokes-mandatory-covid-shots-health-workers-2022-03-01/>

Germany wipes its list of COVID 'high-risk areas' clean

Germany is removing all countries currently on its list of "high-risk areas" as part of a rethink of its coronavirus travel rules that will take effect on Thursday. The country's disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute, said that from now on Germany's list will only include places where high infection rates are linked to variants of COVID-19 that are more virulent than the currently dominant omicron variant, which in many cases leads to relatively mild illness. That change will result in the current list of "high-risk areas," which contains dozens of countries and territories, being wiped clean from Thursday on.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-health-europe-germany-e7ff3f772a4e3dca7576d0338e72c932>

Hong Kong urges residents fretting over COVID measures not to panic

Hong Kong's government said any decision to impose a COVID-19 lockdown would take into account the global financial hub's status and ensure basic needs, and it urged anxious residents who thronged supermarkets this week not to panic.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/hong-kong-urges-residents-fretting-over-covid-measures-not-panic-2022-03-02/>

Partisan Exits

Partisan media exposure could inform COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy

Vaccine hesitancy may be more attributed to partisan media exposure and an individual's pre-existing attitudes, rather than a lack of information about vaccine effectiveness, according to a Washington State University study. The study, published in *Current Psychology*, experimentally tested the intertwined relationships among message frames, partisan media use and attitudes on vaccine intention. In general, the findings show that those who consumed lower amounts of conservative media and held positive vaccine attitudes were higher on vaccine intention. Among people who consumed a higher amount of conservative media and held negative vaccine attitudes, the messages that talked about individual benefits of getting the vaccine resonated more.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-03-partisan-media-exposure-covid-vaccine.html>

COVID-19: New Zealand police move to end three-week vaccine mandate protest

Protesters have fought police with fire extinguishers and pitchforks as officers moved to end an anti-vaccine mandate protest in New Zealand's capital three weeks after it began. The protesters had been outside Wellington's parliament buildings for 23 days when police in riot gear moved in early on Wednesday morning. Protesters used projectiles, shields, fire extinguishers, and pitchforks to fight police, as officers began dismantling protesters' tents and towing away up to 50 vehicles.

<https://news.sky.com/story/new-zealand-police-move-to-end-three-week-covid-vaccine-mandate-protest-12555310>

U.S. appeals court blocks Biden's Navy vaccine policy for COVID

A federal appeals court has delivered a new setback to the Biden administration in a COVID-19 dispute, keeping in place a lower court order that blocked the U.S. Navy from considering the vaccination status of 35 special forces personnel in making deployment decisions. The ruling from the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday night spurned arguments from the U.S. Justice Department that the Navy's deployment decision-making was outside the scope of cases that the courts are allowed to consider and rule on. The appeals panel said the judiciary had the power to weigh the plaintiffs' religious freedom objections, including a "divine instruction not to receive the vaccine."

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/us-appeals-court-blocks-bidens-navy-vaccine-policy-covid-2022-03-01/>

New Zealand protesters set fires as police break up camp

Thick black smoke billowed across the grounds of New Zealand's Parliament and sirens blared on Wednesday as retreating protesters against coronavirus vaccine mandates set fire to tents, mattresses and chairs. It appeared to be a final act of defiance as police broke up the camp that protesters first set up more than three weeks ago. Police retook control of the Parliament grounds although dozens of protesters remained in nearby streets, some hurling objects at officers. Parliament's once carefully manicured grounds were left scarred, a children's slide in ruins. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said that in planning the operation, police had expected hostility, resistance and violence — but it was another thing entirely to witness it.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-health-new-zealand-riots-0972152b0a9bff50ea0bd22492abce92>

Continued Lockdown

Japan set to extend COVID curbs as hospitals battle infections

Japan prepared on Wednesday to extend infection controls in some regions amid high numbers of hospital patients hit by the Omicron variant of COVID-19. The central government has received requests from five prefectures, including Osaka and Kyoto in western Japan, to extend measures set to expire on Sunday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters. Media said 10 prefectures, including Tokyo, the capital, were expected to seek an extension of two to three weeks for the curbs, which encompass shorter business hours and limits on the sale of alcohol.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/japan-set-extend-covid-curbs-hospitals-battle-infection>

[s-2022-03-02/](#)

Hong Kong reports record cases; movements may be restricted

Hong Kong's leader on Wednesday said people's movements may be restricted during mandatory testing this month of the entire population for the coronavirus, as health officials reported a record 55,353 daily infections and over a hundred deaths. Chief executive Carrie Lam said authorities are still refining the plan, but that there would be no "complete" lockdown that would prevent entry and exit from the city. "The extent of it must take into account Hong Kong's circumstances and people's needs," she told reporters. Hong Kong is planning to test its more than 7 million residents as it grapples with soaring numbers of COVID-19 cases in its worst outbreak of the pandemic, linked largely to the omicron variant.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-travel-health-carrie-lam-pandemics-3ecab23cb37f9aad7eb23411551a2d5b>

Scientific Viewpoint

Higher education min. announces clinical trials for 2nd Egyptian COVID-19 vaccine 'EgyVax' begin Tuesday

Higher Education Minister Khaled Abdel Ghaffar will hold a press conference on Tuesday to announce the start of clinical trials for "EgyVax", the second homemade COVID-19 vaccine. The press conference will be attended by Agriculture and Land Reclamation Minister El Sayyed el-Quseir, Head of the Egyptian Drug Authority (EDA) Tamer Essam, Secretary General of University Hospitals Hossam Abdel Ghaffar, as well as representatives of a number of stakeholders. On November 14, the higher education minister announced that the start of the first stage of clinical trials for the first domestically-made coronavirus vaccine "COVI VAX".

<https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/113333/Higher-education-min-announces-clinical-trials-for-2nd-Egyptian-COVID>

Coronavirus vaccine: Indian, Australian researchers devise math model to predict COVID vaccine efficacy

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) here, and Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) in Australia have developed a mathematical model that predicts how antibodies generated by COVID-19 vaccines confer protection against symptomatic infections. The model can potentially optimise the use of available vaccines and speed up the development of new ones. "The reason why predicting vaccine efficacies has been hard is that the processes involved are complex and operate at many interconnected levels," said Narendra Dixit, Professor at the Department of Chemical Engineering, IISc, and the senior author of the study that has been published in Nature Computational Science. "Vaccines trigger a number of different antibodies, each affecting virus growth in the body differently. This in turn affects the dynamics of the infection and the severity of the associated symptoms. Further, different individuals generate different collections of antibodies and in different amounts," he elaborated.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/coronavirus-vaccine-indian-australian-researchers-devise-math-model-to-predict-covid-vaccine-efficacy/articleshow/89937744.cms>

Vaccine protection against Covid-19 fell substantially for children during Omicron surge

Many vaccinated kids experienced breakthrough infections during the Omicron surge, though protection against hospitalization remained stronger, a large new government-funded study found. The study compared the vaccination status of children ages 5 to 17 who were treated for Covid-19 symptoms in emergency departments, urgent care centers and hospitals across 10 states between April 2021 and February 2022. Researchers reviewed records on nearly 40,000 clinic visits and 1,700 hospitalizations. The study was funded by the US Centers for Disease Control and published Tuesday in its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. The CDC study found vaccinated children ages 5 to 11 - the youngest and most recently vaccinated group -- were about 46% less likely to have Covid-19

that resulted in care at an urgent care clinic or emergency room, compared with children who were unvaccinated.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/01/health/vaccine-effectiveness-kids-omicron/index.html>

Scientists seek to solve mystery of why some people do not catch Covid

Phoebe Garrett has attended university lectures without catching Covid; she even hosted a party where everyone subsequently tested positive except her. "I think I've knowingly been exposed about four times," the 22-year-old from High Wycombe said. In March 2021, she participated in the world's first Covid-19 challenge trial, which involved dripping live virus into her nose and pegging her nostrils shut for several hours, in a deliberate effort to infect her. Still her body resisted. "We had multiple rounds of tests, and different methods of testing: throat swabs, nose swabs, other types of swabs that I'd never done before like nasal wicks - where you hold a swab in your nose for a minute - as well as blood tests, but I never developed symptoms, never tested positive," Garrett said. "My mum has always said that our family never gets flu, and I've wondered if there's maybe something behind that."

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/02/scientists-seek-to-solve-mystery-of-why-some-people-do-not-catch-covid>

Covid-19 update: Vaccines protect children from severe symptoms

The global Covid death toll has passed 5.9 million, with a figure of 5,964,704 according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University. Meanwhile, infections have continued past 438 million to a world wide figure of 438,535,937. Covid-19 vaccines protected children and adolescents from severe disease even after the immune-evasive Omicron variant emerged, according to findings from US government reports. After Omicron became dominant in the US late last year, protection against infection and urgent care visits declined for 5- to 17-year-olds who'd received primary inoculations, according to US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data released Tuesday.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/news/covid-symptoms-reduced-vaccines/>

FDA warns against use of certain unauthorized COVID antigen tests

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Tuesday warned people against the use of unauthorized versions of certain COVID-19 rapid antigen tests currently being marketed in the United States. These tests have not been authorized, cleared or approved by the FDA for distribution or use in the United States, the health agency said, adding that they may show false results. The warning was issued against unauthorized versions of Celltrion USA Inc's DiaTrust COVID-19 Ag Rapid Tests, SD Biosensor Inc's STANDARD Q COVID-19 Ag Home Test, and ACON Laboratories' Flowflex SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Test.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/fda-warns-against-use-certain-unauthorized-covid-antigen-tests-2022-03-01/>

Inovio lab tests show COVID vaccine weaker against Omicron, trial enrollment paused

Inovio Pharmaceuticals Inc has paused enrollment for an ongoing late-stage study of its lead COVID-19 vaccine candidate after the shot showed significantly lower levels of antibodies against the Omicron variant in lab testing. The vaccine, INO-4800, maintained robust T-cell response in the lab tests though, leading Inovio to plan changes to the trial design and forecast a delay in reporting preliminary efficacy data from the study. T-cells are a key part of the immune system's second line of defense. The company plans to seek regulatory approval to change the main goal of the study to "prevention of severe disease due to COVID-19" from the earlier goal of "prevention of virologically confirmed COVID-19 disease", it said on Tuesday

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/inovio-says-covid-vaccine-shows-robust-t-cell-response-against-omicron-lab-tests-2022-03-01/>

Nerve damage may explain some cases of long COVID -U.S. study

A small study of patients suffering from persistent symptoms long after a bout of COVID-19 found that nearly 60% had nerve damage possibly caused by a defective immune response, a finding that could point to new treatments, U.S. researchers reported on Tuesday. The study involved in depth exams of 17 people with so-called long COVID, a condition that arises within three months of a COVID-19 infection and lasts at least two months.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/nerve-damage-may-explain-some-cases-long-covid-us-study-2022-03-01/>

Merck's Covid Antiviral Gets WHO Backing for High-Risk Patients

Merck & Co.'s Covid-19 antiviral pill was endorsed by a World Health Organization panel for patients in the early stages of disease who face high risk of hospitalization. The WHO panel of international experts, which looked at data from six randomized clinical trials involving more than 4,000 patients, found a moderate certainty that Merck's molnupiravir reduces the risk of hospital admission and recovery time. The effect on mortality wasn't so clear. The decision was published Thursday in the BMJ medical journal. Merck's pill is used in the U.S. and U.K. to treat Covid patients at high risk of severe illness, but its mechanism of action and lesser efficacy have prompted a shift toward Pfizer Inc.'s Paxlovid and other drugs. U.S. National Institutes of Health guidelines specify that molnupiravir should be used only when other medications for outpatients can't be given.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-03-02/merck-s-covid-antiviral-gets-who-backing-for-high-risk-patients>

CDC data suggest Pfizer vaccine protection holds up in kids 5-11, raising questions on earlier study

Does the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine provide less protection to children aged 5 to 11 than to adolescents 12 to 17? A study from New York state released Monday suggests that's the case. But new data from 10 states released Tuesday tell a different story. The data, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suggest that two doses of the Pfizer vaccine aren't very protective against infection for either age group in the face of the Omicron variant, but that protection against severe illness appears to be holding up equally in both sets of children. They do not suggest more rapid waning, or more marked waning, among the younger group of children.

<https://www.statnews.com/2022/03/01/cdc-data-suggest-pfizer-vaccine-protection-holds-up-in-kids-5-11-raising-questions-on-earlier-study/>

Coronavirus Resurgence

Covid-19 deaths fall for fourth week in a row

The weekly number of deaths involving coronavirus in England and Wales has fallen for the fourth week in a row, figures show. A total of 863 deaths registered in England and Wales in the week ending February 18 mentioned Covid-19 on the death certificate, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This is down 19% on the previous seven days and is the fourth week-on-week fall in a row.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/england-wales-office-for-national-statistics-ons-omicron-b985246.html>

Covid-19 Has Orphaned 5.2 Million Children

An updated modeling study in The Lancet shows that number of children globally affected by COVID-19-associated orphanhood and caregiver death is estimated to have increased dramatically from approximately 2.7 million in April 2021 to a devastating 5.2 million in October 2021. To put those numbers into context, the researchers state that is the equivalent of one child every six seconds during the six-month period. With the pandemic far from over, we have both a moral and public health imperative to protect and support these children from direct and secondary harms. Children's lives are permanently changed by the loss of a mother, father, grandparent, or other primary caregivers. The loss of a parent is an adverse childhood experience that is linked to a greater risk of dropping out of school, lower self-esteem, suicide, violence, sexual abuse, and

developing anxiety, depression, and substance abuse problems. These impacts could be compounded further by the circumstances and additional stressors of the pandemic

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamhaseltine/2022/03/01/covid-19-has-orphaned-52-million-children/>

CDC estimates 140 million US Covid-19 infections

There have been an estimated 140 million Covid-19 infections in the US, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates, even though only 74.3 million cases have been reported as of January 31. The data comes from the CDC's nationwide antibody seroprevalence survey, in which it's working with state, local, academic and commercial partners to test blood samples for antibodies to the coronavirus triggered by infection, not by vaccination. By measuring Covid-19 seroprevalence, the study provides an estimate of the percentage of the population that was previously infected. The blood samples are submitted to commercial labs for unrelated reasons, such as routine medical checkups, and identifying information is removed. Every two weeks, researchers collected data from these samples, which encompass all 50 states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/01/health/140-million-covid-19-infections/index.html>

Italy records 178000 excess deaths during COVID pandemic

Italy has recorded some 178,000 excess deaths, mostly attributable to COVID-19, during the coronavirus pandemic, the National Statistics Office (ISTAT) and National Health Institute (ISS) said in a report on Wednesday. The excess death figure, measured to the end of January 2022, calculates the difference between the total deaths from all causes since the start of the pandemic and the expected trend based on the 2015-2019 average. Some 145,334 deaths were attributed to COVID-19 infections, 53% of which occurred in 2020, 41% in 2021 and the remainder in the first month of this year.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/italy-records-178000-excess-deaths-during-covid-pandemic-2022-03-02/>

Hong Kong to report more than 50000 new COVID cases on Wednesday -TVB

Hong Kong health authorities are expected to report more than 50,000 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, setting a record for daily infections in the global financial hub, broadcaster TVB reported, without identifying the source of the information.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/hong-kong-report-more-than-50000-new-covid-cases-wednesday-tvb-2022-03-02/>

COVID cases, deaths continue to fall globally, WHO reports

The number of new coronavirus cases reported globally dropped by 16% last week, marking a month-long decline in COVID-19 infections, according to figures from the World Health Organization. In its weekly report on the pandemic issued late Tuesday, the U.N. health agency also said that deaths fell by 10%, continuing a drop in fatalities first seen last week. WHO said there were more than 10 million new cases and about 60,000 deaths globally. The Western Pacific was the only region where COVID-19 increased, with about a third more infections than the previous week. Deaths rose by 22% in the Western Pacific and about 4% in the Middle East, while declining everywhere else.

<https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-health-pandemics-united-nations-269660a4236ad73527d057fd6b74d816>

New Lockdown

Hong Kong government urges residents spooked by citywide lockdown not to panic

Hong Kong's government said any decision to impose a COVID-19 lockdown would take into account the global financial hub's status and ensure basic needs such as food and urged anxious residents who raided supermarkets this week not to panic. The government said it was still planning and "refining" details for a compulsory mass COVID testing scheme and would announce details once

they had been confirmed. The government statement, released late on Tuesday, comes amid widespread confusion and chaos with many residents fatigued and frustrated by the mixed messaging and almost daily tweaking of coronavirus rules.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/hong-kong-government-urges-residents-spooked-by-citywide-lockdown-not-panic-2022-03-02/>