

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

21st Dec 2020

Isolation Tips

Covid vaccine: More than 130,000 vaccinated in UK in first week

More than 130,000 people have been vaccinated in the first week of the UK's vaccination programme. Minister Nadhim Zahawi, who is in charge of vaccine rollout, tweeted 137,897 people had been given their first doses of the Pfizer / BioNTech jab between 8 and 15 December. He described it as a "really good start" for the programme. The figure only captures the start of the community vaccination programme run by GPs which launched on Monday. About 200 of these local vaccination clinics are expected to be up and running by the end of the week.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55332242>

Hygiene Helpers

Covid: Austrians who pass antigen test to be exempt from lockdown

Austria is to enter a third lockdown from Boxing Day but will stage mass coronavirus tests in mid-January to determine who will be exempt from certain restrictions, the government announced on Friday. Italy is preparing to outline new measures that could lead to a complete lockdown over the Christmas and new year period, while the Spanish government has warned of a possible "third wave" of infections. Austria's latest lockdown, which comes into effect on 26 December, will include daytime curfews, the closure of non-essential shops, and schools switching to remote learning from 7 to 15 January. Mass antigen tests being offered on the weekend of 16 and 17 January will give people the opportunity to "test themselves free" of restrictions, according to the interior minister, Karl Nehammer.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/18/covid-in-europe-spain-facing-third-wave-while-macron-has-real-symptoms>

Chilean president handed \$3,500 fine for mask-less selfie with stranger on beach

Chilean President Sebastian Pinera was slapped with a \$3,500 fine on Friday after posing for a selfie on the beach with a bystander without wearing a mask as required during the coronavirus pandemic, health authorities said. Chile has strict rules on mask wearing in all public places and violations are punishable with sanctions that include fines and even jail terms. Pinera apologized then turned himself in shortly after the selfie surfaced on social media in early December.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-chile/chile-announces-fresh-lockdowns-as-president-snapped-without-mask-idUSKBN28H28W>

Peter Roderick: Transparency in approving covid-19 vaccines

Transparency is generally regarded as essential for public trust in medicines, and likely to lead to better decision-making. Yet lack of transparency has been a hallmark of the regulation of medicines. Modest improvements have been made over the last decade, but the spotlight is being shone again on how the regulatory system operates as approvals are being given or considered for several covid-19 vaccines. In the US, the Food and Drug Administration's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) held live-streamed public meetings to discuss the issue generally on 22 October 2020, and specifically for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, with an FDA analysis, on 10 December ahead of the FDA's decision. That meeting voted 17/4, and one abstention, in favour of emergency use approval, which was issued the next day. A further meeting is scheduled pre-licensure for the Moderna vaccine on 17 December. As the FDA head, Stephen M. Hahn has said,

“The FDA recognizes that transparency and dialogue are critical for the public to have confidence in COVID-19 vaccines”.

<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/12/17/peter-roderick-transparency-in-approving-covid-19-vaccines/>

The U.S. says employers can require workers to get the Covid-19 vaccine.

Employers can require workers to get a Covid-19 vaccine and bar them from the workplace if they refuse, the federal government said in guidelines issued this week. Public health experts see employers as playing an important role in vaccinating enough people to reach herd immunity and get a handle on a pandemic that has killed more than 300,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/19/world/the-us-says-employers-can-require-workers-to-get-the-covid-19-vaccine.html>

Community Activities

Rich Americans are trying to cut the line for Covid vaccine, doctors say

Rich Americans in California are offering to buy their way to the front of the coronavirus vaccine line as the state continues to see a surge in infections and deaths, reports have said. Speaking to CNN, a number of concierge doctors in the area say have received a number of requests for early access to the new vaccine in return for premium payments or donations. Dr Jeff Toll, whose boutique internal medicine practice has admitting privileges at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, said his high-profile clients have offered large sums in turn for prioritisation. The doctor told outlets that one of his clientele, which includes chief executives and entertainment figures, offered to donate \$25,000 to the hospital for early access to the shot.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/rich-wealthy-coronavirus-vaccine-covid-americans-california-b1776549.html>

Postcards from Wuhan: One year on, residents share lockdown memories, hopes for 2021

In China's Wuhan, the original epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak, the city's residents are returning to normal life, even as they continue to grapple with memories of the early outbreak, which struck fear in the city. It's been almost seven months since the city recorded a locally transmitted case of the disease due to a strict city-wide lockdown and a mass testing event of almost all the city's 11 million residents. Today, restaurants, shopping streets and bars are crowded, but locals are still experiencing the lasting impact of the lockdown on mental health and work.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-wuhan-residents-idUKKBN28U021>

Could Beyoncé do for the coronavirus vaccine what Elvis did for polio?

Beyoncé could help, it's been suggested, as could Tom Hanks or The Rock. Or maybe an athlete instead. Serena Williams, perhaps, or even Michael Jordan? As millions of Americans continue to express reluctance or outright refusal to get vaccinated against the coronavirus, the country's political and public-health leaders are pondering a question critical to ending the pandemic: Who can change their minds? When the federal government faced a similar dilemma more than a half-century ago, it had a king at its disposal.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/coronavirus-vaccine-elvis-polio-beyonce-us-b1776743.html>

New COVAX agreements renew vaccine hopes for developing countries

Global health officials have feared that richer nations could snap up much of the supply of COVID-19 vaccines, and since the early days of the pandemic, the WHO and its partners, including the GAVI vaccine alliance, have been pushing forward with COVAX, a plan to support the development of new vaccines and secure doses for participating countries. Experts have maintained that beating back the virus in all parts of the world, especially with vaccine, is a key step in ending the pandemic threat, but there are deep worries that a wide funding gap will cause a lengthy delay in the first vaccine deliveries for developing nations. In its announcement, the WHO said COVAX now has

agreements in place to access nearly 2 billion doses of several promising vaccine candidates.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/new-covax-agreements-renew-vaccine-hopes-developing-countries>

Working Remotely

Chief remote working officers are now navigating organizations into a post-pandemic world

The pandemic has shuttered offices and transformed companies into virtual workplaces overnight. Now it's giving rise to a new corporate job title: head of remote work. The role may seem like a pandemic-era fad, especially with vaccines beginning to roll out. But experts contend that even after offices can safely reopen, many companies will allow employees more flexibility in terms of where they work. Managing both a remote and an office-bound workforce creates a host of challenges for organizations, with implications for real estate, technology, human resources, finance and corporate culture.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-chief-remote-working-officers-are-now-navigating-organizations-in-to-a/>

Flexible working: lessons from the great work-from-home mass experiment

For years, politicians and employers alike have talked up the promise of flexible working. And it looked like change was happening. Last year, the UK government announced a consultation around whether flexible work should not just be available, but become employees' default option in its annual Queen's Speech. But 2020 rapidly became a hugely different year in Westminster and flexible working rights seemingly ground to a halt at the political level. In the end it took the COVID-19 pandemic, with its attendant government-enforced lockdowns, for working from home to sit at the centre of an unanticipated global experiment and to become the catalyst for a real discussion about flexible work

<https://theconversation.com/flexible-working-lessons-from-the-great-work-from-home-mass-experiment-152268>

COVID-19 gives single Millennials the chance to see the world while working remotely

Remote work has grown 44 percent since 2010, according to Built In, a tech website for job recruiters. But "geographic flexibility" — the ability to work from any location — has skyrocketed in 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic. While not every job can be accomplished in a Wi-Fi-enabled van, there is increasing acceptance from many companies that it doesn't matter where a worker logs on. And that might just be here to stay: A new survey out of Harvard found that 16 percent of American workers will pivot to working at home at least two days per week after the virus subsides.

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/COVID-19-gives-single-Millennials-the-chance-to-15814764.php>

Virtual Classrooms

COVID-19 Is Costing Visually Impaired Students Time That Can't Be Made Up

As parents and educators continue to navigate remote learning, children with visual impairments have the added burden of learning in virtual classrooms that aren't designed for them. Hybrid and socially distant in-person classes present challenges of their own. And looming overhead, there's the worry about the time their children have lost in academic and life skill classes. Each parent knows there's a limit on the years their children have left in school, and the clock keeps ticking away no matter how much the pandemic has halted everything else.

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-12-18-covid-19-is-costing-visually-impaired-students-time-that-can-t-be-made-up>

A tech expert's advice on how to best approach virtual learning

With more students potentially moving to online learning platforms, parents are having to navigate their way through virtual classrooms. While many schools across Canada begin their winter break on

Monday, some school boards are uncertain if students will return to an in-person classroom in the new year. On Wednesday, the Toronto District School Board sent a letter to parents warning them to prepare for the possibility that students may not return to classes following the winter break. The Ontario government also echoed the warning. According to tech expert Amber Mac, parents need to prepare to adjust to e-learning just as much as students do in order for there to be an effective learning experience

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/a-tech-expert-s-advice-on-how-to-best-approach-virtual-learning-1.5238833>

Teachers virtually unheralded for mastering COVID-19 curveballs

Society has acknowledged the devotion and sacrifice of medical staff and first responders, but we seem to have neglected the important role teachers and school support staff are fulfilling during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the pandemic raging across the land, the profession has only become more difficult. Teachers are being taken for granted now more than ever. Teachers have always spent their own money on their classrooms and students. But, with remote learning, many teachers have had to invest dollars into setting up a home-based remote classroom. Then, they have to manage all this new technology. There are also issues teachers cannot control from their virtual classroom. The skill set needed to manage “classrooms” with teachers in one location and students in other locations is complicated. The more teachers do, the more school districts and parents seem to demand.

<https://www.nj.com/opinion/2020/12/teachers-virtually-unheralded-for-mastering-covid-19-curveballs-opinion.html>

Public Policies

European states ban travel from UK as new Covid strain takes hold

European countries have banned flights and ferries carrying passengers from the UK in a desperate attempt to suppress the spread of a new variant of the coronavirus that has plunged south-east England into a tier 4 lockdown. In the most dramatic development, France announced it was suspending passenger and human-handled freight transport from the UK for 48 hours from 11pm GMT. The Road Haulage Association warned the move would have a “devastating effect” on supply chains already disrupted by Brexit stockpiling and pandemic restrictions. The UK government said it expected “significant disruption in Kent” as a result of the French move and was “urging everybody – including all hauliers” to avoid travelling to ports in the county until further notice.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/dec/20/european-states-ban-flights-and-ferries-from-uk-to-combat-new-covid-strain>

Congress agrees to a Covid stimulus deal. Here’s who’s likely eligible for a \$600 check and when you’ll get it

After months of failed negotiations, lawmakers have finally agreed to a new \$900 billion coronavirus relief package. Congressional leaders have not yet released text of the more than \$2 trillion legislation — which will include broader government spending measures — but the pandemic recovery bill was set to include direct payments of up to \$600 to eligible adults, plus \$600 per child dependent. While the adult benefit would be half the size of the first stimulus check, the amount earmarked for qualifying dependents was raised by \$100.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/20/second-stimulus-check-how-much-to-expect-from-new-covid-relief.html>

Italy has patient with new COVID strain, nations ban UK flights

Italy has found a patient with the new coronavirus strain, that was also found, in Britain, the health ministry announced on Sunday. Italy has found a patient with the new coronavirus strain, that was also found, in Britain, the health ministry announced on Sunday. Several European countries and others, such as Kuwait, have banned flights to and from the United Kingdom, in hopes of blocking the new strain which is sweeping across southern England from establishing a strong foothold on the continent.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/20/countries-close-border-to-britain-as-new-covid-variant-surges>

FDA authorizes Moderna coronavirus vaccine for emergency use across the US

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized a vaccine developed by Moderna and federal researchers, the second Covid-19 vaccine to receive such approval for emergency use across the US. The vaccine's emergency authorization brings the second drug to prevent Covid-19 to the American public within a week, and millions of doses are expected to begin immediate distribution to health workers and long-term care residents. Moderna's vaccine is 94% effective at preventing Covid-19, and is authorized in adults 18 and older. The authorization comes after it was recommended by an FDA advisory panel of independent experts.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/18/fda-authorizes-moderna-coronavirus-vaccine-emergency-use-across-the-us>

Pfizer/Biontech COVID-19 vaccine wins Swiss regulatory approval

Switzerland will start getting doses of COVID-19 vaccine from Pfizer and partner BioNTech within days after its drugs regulator authorised use of the jabs in what officials called the world's first approval under a standard procedure. Two months after receiving the application, Swissmedic allowed the vaccine for people aged 16 and older after a rolling review of documents being submitted. That cleared the way for an initial delivery of just over 100,000 doses, which the army will put into deep-freeze storage and send to cantons to start inoculations of vulnerable people, including the elderly and those with medical conditions.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-swiss-vaccine-idUKKBN28T0FC>

Covid-19: 'Constructive' North-South meeting on Covid-19

Discussions at Friday's North-South Ministerial Council (NSMC) meeting have been "constructive", Taoiseach (Irish PM) Micheál Martin has said. Writing after the meeting, Mr Martin said the response to Covid-19 had been "high on the agenda", along with "the implications of Brexit". The meeting between representatives from both sides of the border was held virtually. The first and deputy first ministers took part in the meeting. They were joined by Irish government leaders. The NSMC is the main body for cross-border co-operation between the governments of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-55335489>

Tier 4 rules for London as Christmas cancelled by stay at home lockdown

Christmas bubbles have been axed for London and many surrounding areas as they were slammed into Tier 4 as a new fast-spreading variant of Covid-19 was blamed for a surge in cases. Prime Minister Boris Johnson effectively cancelled Christmas gatherings for millions of families in London and the wider South East on Saturday as he sought to contain the spread of the mutant virus. The Christmas relaxation for the rest of the country was dramatically scaled back to three households being able to meet on Christmas Day alone rather than for five days in England.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/tier-4-rules-london-covid-christmas-lockdown-b390412.html>

Virus surge causes Christmas lockdown in Germany | World

My five-year-old German nephew, Finn Gustav, was devastated last week to hear the news of a Christmas lockdown. There will be no markets to sample marzipan sweets and stollen. No merry-go-rounds or Ferris wheels. He lives in the central city of Weimar, home of the country's enlightenment, but even the ice-skating rink set up every year in the main square around the bronze statues of Goethe and Schiller will be missing. "Alles wegen dem doofen corona" - "all because of that stupid coronavirus," he says...

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/virus-surge-causes-christmas-lockdown-in-germany-s317wq09k>

Switzerland adopts 'lockdown light', urges people to stay home

Switzerland headed for a second lockdown on Friday as the government ordered restaurants and sports and recreation centres closed for a month from Tuesday and urged people to stay home. Backing away from its “middle path” approach that had aimed to avoid business-crippling consequences, the government conceded immediate, strong action was vital to curb stubbornly high coronavirus infection rates that had prompted calls from scientists and medical professionals for tighter measures.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-swiss/switzerland-moves-towards-lockdown-light-as-people-urged-to-stay-home-idUKKBN28S217?il=0>

COVID-19: Moderna coronavirus vaccine approved for emergency use in the US

Moderna's coronavirus vaccine has become the second to be approved for emergency use in the US. The country's Food and Drug Administration announced the authorisation a day after the agency's panel of outside experts backed the vaccine. The FDA based its decision on results from a late-stage study of 30,000 volunteers which found that the vaccine was nearly 95% effective at preventing illness from COVID-19. The study also said there were no serious safety concerns resulting from the vaccine's use, although possible side effects include sore arms, fever, fatigue and muscle aches.

<https://news.sky.com/story/moderna-coronavirus-vaccine-approved-for-emergency-use-in-the-us-12166939>

Austria readies extra 1 bln euro aid for lockdown-hit business

Austria expects to pay out an extra nearly 1 billion euros (\$1.23 billion) in support for companies hit by a new lockdown that the government imposed to curb the spread of the coronavirus, Finance Minister Gernot Blumel said on Saturday. Austria will go into its third lockdown after Christmas and lift it earlier for people who get tested, the government said on Friday. The new lockdown comes 11 days after a second lockdown ended. Blumel said companies in November and December had made more than 120,000 requests worth 2.2 billion euros in compensation for revenue lost as a result of the clampdown, of which around 1.8 billion euros had already been paid out.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-austria/austria-readies-extra-1-bln-euro-aid-for-lockdown-hit-business-idUSL8N2IZ06A>

Breastfeeding mothers will not be offered Covid vaccine, say regulators

Women's rights and breastfeeding organisations are challenging government and NHS guidance that the groups say forces mothers to choose between feeding their infants in the way that they choose and protecting themselves from Covid by being vaccinated. The NHS website advises lactating mothers to wait until they have stopped breastfeeding before having the Covid-19 vaccine. It adds: “There's no evidence it's unsafe if you're pregnant or breastfeeding. But more evidence is needed before you can be offered the vaccine.” The UK government website repeats the advice, saying it was “precautionary until additional evidence is available to support the use of this vaccine in pregnancy and breastfeeding”. There have been no trials of Covid vaccines on breastfeeding women.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/20/breastfeeding-mothers-will-not-be-offered-covid-vaccine-say-regulators>

Oxford Covid-19 vaccine 'will be approved before new year'

The Oxford AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine is expected to be approved before the new year with vaccination to begin from the second week in January, the Telegraph reports.

<https://www.scotsman.com/health/oxford-covid-19-vaccine-will-be-approved-new-year-3073783>

Sweden bumps up COVID-19 measures, but stops short of lockdown as cases soar

Sweden has introduced its toughest measures yet in the face of soaring COVID-19 infections, including a recommendation to wear masks at peak hours on public transport. But the Government stopped short of ordering a general lockdown of society. Unlike many other European countries, Sweden has resisted imposing lockdowns, relying on voluntary measures focused on social

distancing and good hygiene. It has left most schools, businesses and restaurants open throughout the pandemic. However, a severe second wave of infections, with record numbers of new cases almost every week for the past two months, has prompted the Government to do more.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-12-19/toughest-covid-19-measures-yet-for-sweden-as-cases-soar/13000482>

WA brings back hard border with NSW

Western Australia is reinstating its hard border with NSW as of midnight tonight in response to the growing COVID-19 cluster on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Premier Mark McGowan said NSW had moved to a "medium risk" state. After midnight tonight, arrivals from NSW without a legitimate exemption could well be turned back at the border or the airport, Mr McGowan said.

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/coronavirus-sydney-outbreak-western-australia-returns-to-hard-border-with-nsw/8a449a2f-6ecd-4ce9-98c4-4322cf5f4814>

Wales to enter national lockdown from midnight, with rules relaxed on Christmas Day only

Wales will enter a national lockdown from midnight on Saturday, with festive bubbles cancelled for all but Christmas Day. Mark Drakeford, the first minister, announced the "stay at home" rules after hosting an emergency cabinet meeting amid concerns over a new strain of coronavirus, which he said is present "throughout Wales". He detailed how the pattern of transmission in London and the southeast of England, which has been linked to the new variant, is "remarkably consistent with the rapid acceleration of transmission in Wales" and the high case rates seen in recent weeks.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/wales-lockdown-national-christmas-rules-b1776611.html>

Nearly all of California under stay at home order as FDA authorizes second vaccine

Nearly all of California is under regional stay-at-home orders triggered by alarmingly low capacity in intensive care units. Statewide, a sliver of those critical beds were available: 2.1 percent. The news came as a second coronavirus vaccine received emergency authorization Friday, an unprecedented scientific feat that gives the United States two powerful tools to fight a pandemic that emerged almost exactly a year ago.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/12/18/coronavirus-covid-live-updates-us/>

Maintaining Services

Pfizer says Covid-19 vaccine supply will continue into early 2021 after Jeremy Hunt suggested they will run out within weeks

Pfizer has responded to reports that its Covid-19 vaccine could run out after former health secretary Jeremy Hunt suggested they would run dry by February. The pharmaceutical giant said deliveries were "on track". In a statement, Pfizer said: "The deliveries are on track and progressing according to our agreed schedule. "We can confirm, in accordance with the schedule, that there will be continued deliveries into the UK in early 2021, with shipments scheduled to arrive before March." The statement came after Mr Hunt suggested the UK's stocks were set to run out within weeks with no more supplies likely to arrive before March.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/covid-pfizer-vaccine-oxford-jeremy-hunt-b386544.html>

U.S. COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan in focus as Moderna shots leave warehouses

The United States will recommend on Sunday who will be next in line to get inoculated as the distribution of the second approved coronavirus vaccine began with shipments of Moderna Inc's leaving warehouses for healthcare facilities across the country.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-usa-vaccine/us-covid-19-vaccine-distribution-plan-in-focus-as-moderna-shots-leave-warehouses-idUKKBN28U0DR>

Sydney virus cluster grows, border restrictions isolate city

The New South Wales premier, Gladys Berejiklian, has warned residents of greater Sydney to

prepare for an increase in restrictions if the outbreak of Covid-19 expands beyond the northern beaches. Meanwhile travellers from NSW to Queensland will need a border pass declaration from 1am Sunday and Western Australia announced it was reinstating its hard border with NSW. The Sydney to Hobart yacht race was cancelled after Tasmania also introduced border restrictions with Sydney.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-australia-idUSL1N2J001G>

COVID vaccine is bonanza for digital supply chain tracking industry

Logistical hurdles are a significant risk for efforts to rapidly distribute COVID-19 vaccines, but they have resulted in booming business for companies such as private California-based Cloudleaf, Germany's SAP SE and others that sell technology for monitoring shipments from factory freezer to shot in the arm. Cloudleaf, backed by Intel Capital, the venture arm of chipmaker Intel Corp, uses sensors attached to material containers to track the location, temperature, humidity, vibration and acceleration. The sensors send data to the cloud, where an artificial intelligence algorithm can predict if action is needed to prevent a product from becoming exposed to temperatures outside the recommended range, known as excursions.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-tech-supplychain-focu/covid-vaccine-is-bonanza-for-digital-supply-chain-tracking-industry-idUKKBN28R1FV>

Healthcare Innovations

Mutant coronavirus in the United Kingdom sets off alarms but its importance remains unclear

Scientists have never seen the virus acquire more than a dozen mutations seemingly at once. They think it happened during a long infection of a single patient that allowed SARS-CoV-2 to go through an extended period of fast evolution, with multiple variants competing for advantage. One reason to be concerned, Rambaut says, is that among the 17 are eight mutations in the gene that encodes the spike protein on the viral surface, two of which are particularly worrisome. One, called N501Y, has previously been shown to increase how tightly the protein binds to the ACE2 receptor, its entry point into human cells. The other, named 69-70del, leads to the loss of two amino acids in the spike protein and has been found in viruses that eluded the immune response in some immunocompromised patients.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/12/mutant-coronavirus-united-kingdom-sets-alarms-its-importance-remains-unclear>

New 'more traditional' coronavirus vaccine by Valneva to be trialled

Bristol is among a select few locations to launch clinical trials for a new coronavirus vaccine candidate. Biotech company Valneva has developed the "more traditional" vaccine in West Lothian, Scotland, and is rolling out a UK trial at four testing sites. The vaccine will initially be tested on 150 participants across Bristol, Birmingham, Newcastle and Southampton, with University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust hosting in Bristol. It is said to be the only vaccine candidate so far to use an inactive version of the virus, and if this early phase of testing is successful, it will progress to a much larger trial involving 4,000 people from April 2021. Bristol vaccine expert Adam Finn is chief investigator for the study, and said the first vaccinations will start on Monday (December 21).

<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/new-more-traditional-coronavirus-vaccine-4812472>

Antibody cocktail treatments show some benefit in 2 COVID studies

Two studies published yesterday in the New England Journal of Medicine discuss outcomes in COVID-19 patients given monoclonal antibody treatments, one showing that tocilizumab lowered the odds of needing mechanical ventilation and death but did not improve survival, and the other finding that REGN-COV2 lowered viral load—particularly in patients whose immune response hadn't yet

been triggered or had a high viral load at baseline. Most benefit in moderate

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/12/antibody-cocktail-treatments-show-some-benefit-2-covid-studies>