

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

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Isolation Tips

End isolation for people with two Covid-19 vaccines, says Labour

Labour has called on the government to bring forward the date exempting double-vaccinated people from self-isolation rules by more than a week. Under current plans the exemption comes into force on Monday August 16 but Sir Keir Starmer says he wants to see the rules to change on Saturday August 7 in an attempt to end the “summer of chaos” caused by the pandemic.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/end-isolation-for-people-with-two-covid-19-vaccines-says-labour-hwhs69r30>

Hygiene Helpers

French security forces brace for anti-health pass protests

France braced for more protests on Saturday against the upcoming special virus passes that will be needed to enter restaurants, as police took up posts along Paris’ Champs-Elysees to guard against an invasion of the famed avenue by rowdy demonstrators. Some 3,000 security forces deployed around the French capital for a third Saturday of protests.

<https://apnews.com/article/europe-health-coronavirus-pandemic-256bbfd835e6388219390cacb536eaba>

Germany could make unvaccinated pay for COVID tests — report

The German government plans to end free coronavirus tests once enough Germans are vaccinated, according to a newspaper report. Although 51% of the population is fully inoculated, the pace is slowing.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/germany-could-make-unvaccinated-pay-for-covid-tests-e2-80-94-report/ar-AAMMynq>

Bring in the kids: Estonian city targets youths for jabs

With her father in tow, 13-year-old Gloria Raudjarv marched through a vaccination center inside a sports hall in Estonia’s second-largest city and up to a nurse for her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/bring-in-the-kids-estonian-city-targets-youths-for-jabs/ar-AAMM1aP>

Ireland overtakes ‘nearest neighbour’ UK with 72.4% of adults vaccinated, says Taoiseach

Taoiseach Micheál Martin has said Ireland has overtaken the UK when it comes to vaccine rollout. He said Ireland now had 72.4 per cent of adults fully vaccinated while the UK had 72.1 per cent. “The vaccine rollout is continuing at great pace. Today we edged ahead of our nearest neighbours - a brilliant effort by everyone involved,” he said. Earlier, Mr Martin praised the “positive uptake” of vaccinations at walk-in centres which are open across the country this bank holiday weekend.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/ireland-overtakes-nearest-neighbour-uk-with-72-4-of-adults-vaccinated-says-taoiseach-1.4636073>

Lebanon restricts cafes, beaches to the vaccinated or COVID tested

Lebanon is to limit entry to restaurants, cafes, pubs and beaches to people holding COVID-19 vaccine certificates or those who have taken antibodies tests, the tourism ministry said on Friday. Non-vaccinated employees of these establishments would be required to conduct a PCR test every 72 hours, it added. The move comes amidst a surge in infections with around 1,104 positive cases registered on Thursday compared to a few hundred a day in previous months.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-lebanon/lebanon-restricts-cafes-beaches-to-the-vaccinated-or-covid-tested-idUSL1N2P61SB>

Israel's president gets third COVID-19 shot, urges boosters for over-60s

Israeli President Isaac Herzog received a third shot of coronavirus vaccine on Friday, kicking off a campaign to give booster doses to people aged over 60 as part of efforts to slow the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israels-president-launches-drive-give-third-covid-19-shot-over-60s-2021-07-30/>

Thailand renews COVID-19 vaccination drive for monks at risk

Thailand began a renewed drive to vaccinate Buddhist monks and other temple workers in Bangkok against the coronavirus on Friday, as the country battles its most deadly surge in infections since the pandemic began. Officials said they planned to provide AstraZeneca vaccines to 221 temples in the Thai capital, before beginning distribution in other parts of the country.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/thailand-renews-covid-19-vaccination-drive-monks-risk-2021-07-30/>

Europe has caught up to the U.S. on coronavirus vaccinations — and is deploying near-mandates to get further

It wasn't quite a mandate, but the announcement landed with nearly the same power. After Italy said last week that its coronavirus health passport would be required to go to the movies or dine indoors, daily bookings for inoculations soared. A new kind of patient started arriving at vaccination centers: people who had been wavering or reluctant. In one waiting room in Rome, Federica Puccetti, 19, said she still didn't want the shot. But she had plans to go to the island of Sardinia. Inoculation had become the path to a normal vacation.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/covid-vaccines-mandates-passports-europe/2021/07/30/076503da-ef15-11eb-81b2-9b7061a582d8_story.html

Community Activities

Broadway to require vaccinations, masks for audience members

Broadway theatergoers will need to prove they've been vaccinated for COVID-19 and masks will be required when theaters reopen in the coming weeks, producers announced Friday. Audience members will have to wear face coverings and show proof they are fully vaccinated by a FDA or WHO authorized vaccine when they enter the theaters until at least the end of October, the Broadway League said in a news release. "Get vaccinated, and we'll see you in the fall," tweeted Broadway and TV star Jeremy Jordan. Composer Jason Robert Brown also agreed with the move: "That's right. That's where we're at."

<https://apnews.com/article/entertainment-business-health-arts-and-entertainment-coronavirus-pandemic-32d6f6fb7133090e6580c41d19bcc8b2>

COVID: Berlin court bans anti-lockdown protests

Judges in the German capital have moved to ban a number of weekend demonstrations amid fears they will lead to a rise in coronavirus infections. Police expect protesters to travel to Berlin nonetheless.

<https://www.dw.com/en/covid-berlin-court-bans-anti-lockdown-protests/a-58712622>

Thailand outlaws reports that cause 'fear' as Covid-19 cases surge

Thailand will allow officials to block online reports that cause "fear", even if they are true, in a move critics have lambasted as an effort to shut down debate of the government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic. The measure announced late on Thursday will penalise anyone who causes "misunderstandings" or jeopardises national security during the country's state of emergency, which has been in effect since March 2020.

<https://www.ft.com/content/01a55669-f9e2-4d9f-97c7-cffec08d19a>

'I am furious with myself': Unvaccinated Covid patient describes the exhausting illness

Sitting in her hospital room in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Aimee Matzen struggled to breathe as she described how exhausting it is to have Covid-19. "The fact that I am here now, I am furious with myself," she told CNN between deep, deliberate breaths. "Because I was not vaccinated." Matzen, 44, finds herself in the Covid-19 intensive care unit at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge. She is receiving oxygen treatments and hopes she stays well enough to avoid getting hooked up to a ventilator.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/29/health/louisiana-covid-19-hotspot/index.html>

Working Remotely

From John Lewis to NatWest, employers bank on remote working

Millions of workers are expected to spend more days at home than they do in the office as the pandemic leads to a "revolution" in working patterns. The so-called "3:2" model, three days in the office and two at home during the working week, is expected to become the norm for many workers, while others adopt the "2:3". The shake-up to the long-established five days a week in the office could not have been imagined 18 months ago but businesses said the pandemic, which forced millions to try home-working for the first time, had caused a permanent change in workers' expectations.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/from-john-lewis-to-natwest-employers-bank-on-remote-working-jtr6q9pfx>

LinkedIn allows employees to work fully remote, removes in-office expectation

LinkedIn will allow employees to opt for full-time remote work or a hybrid option as offices gradually reopen, Chief People Officer Teuila Hanson told Reuters. This new policy is a shift from the initial indication last October that Microsoft's professional social networking site would expect employees to work from an office 50% of the time when COVID-19 pandemic restrictions lift. The updated policy, offering the flexibility to work remotely full-time or work at an office part-time, will apply to LinkedIn's global workforce of more than 16,000 employees.

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/linkedin-allow-most-employees-work-remotely-reversing-course-2021-07-29/>

How to Make Friends While Working from Home? Ask These Office Newbies.

Starting a remote job can be hard, but many people have found new ways to forge work friendships during the pandemic. There's no longer a proverbial water cooler to generate casual encounters, and some younger workers have never had a physical office at all. But they've overcome the awkwardness of the digital chat box to initiate meaningful, if often distanced, friendships. Some online work friends have even found success taking their hangouts offline once the vaccine rollout made socializing and travel easier.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/work-from-home-new-employees-friends-11627590247>

Big tech companies are at war with employees over remote work

All across the United States, the leaders at large tech companies like Apple, Google, and Facebook are engaged in a delicate dance with thousands of employees who have recently become convinced that physically commuting to an office every day is an empty and unacceptable demand from their employers. The COVID-19 pandemic forced these companies to operate with mostly remote workforces for months straight. And since many of them are based in areas with relatively high vaccination rates, the calls to return to the physical office began to sound over the summer. But thousands of high-paid workers at these companies aren't having it. Many of them don't want to go back to the office full-time, even if they're willing to do so a few days a week.

<https://arstechnica.com/gadgets/2021/08/vaccines-reopenings-and-worker-revolts-big-techs-contentious-return-to-the-office/>

Flex Work Leaves San Francisco Trailing NYC in Office Comeback

A fifth of all office space vacant. Tech companies looking to offload millions of square feet they'd previously leased. Rents down 14%. The San Francisco office market, once among the most expensive and sought-after in the U.S., fell harder than just about anywhere in the country during the pandemic. Now, it's getting left behind as other major cities see faster recoveries. With a high proportion of employers allowing workers to do their jobs remotely, available office space in San Francisco keeps piling up -- with potentially huge ramifications for downtown small businesses, apartments and the local tax base. And, as the delta variant spreads, what momentum companies had in returning to the office is slowing.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-30/flex-work-leaves-san-francisco-trailing-nyc-in-office-comeback?utm_source=twitter&utm_content=business&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&utm_medium=social&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business

Virtual Classrooms

Most Parents Think Kids Focus More With Remote Learning

A new survey is showing that the majority of parents felt that their child was more focused when doing school virtually. Most of the discussion between parents has been about school over the last 18 months, and how much virtual school has held back their children. COVID-19 changed how schools looked for everyone, and schools went to virtual learning to help stop the spread and protect the children from contracting the virus. However, there are always positives to take from any situation, and a new poll may be highlighting a different opinion when it comes to virtual learning. According to Study Finds, a survey was done that shows that the majority of some parents actually felt that their child focused more on school when they were completing it virtually as opposed to in-person.

<https://www.moms.com/most-parents-think-kids-focus-more-remote-learning/>

Textbook Publisher Pearson Bets Big on Online Learning

Andy Bird joined education-resource company Pearson PLC as chief executive officer at a time when education was undergoing an upheaval—the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. With students around the world suddenly learning from home, the company's online business saw big growth: Enrollment at Pearson's online K-12 schooling offering, Connections Academy, grew by 40%, says Mr. Bird. Now that many students are returning to their classrooms, Mr. Bird thinks that growth rate will likely slow. Even so, the CEO is betting that some of the popularity online learning gained during the pandemic is here to stay—and Pearson is betting big on virtual offerings. It is launching a mobile app for college students called Pearson+ that will offer audio content, note-taking and other study tools.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/textbook-publisher-pearson-bets-big-on-online-learning-11627680310>

Public Policies

Pfizer and Moderna raise prices for COVID-19 vaccines in EU

Pfizer Inc and Moderna Inc have raised the prices of their COVID-19 vaccines in their latest European Union supply contracts, the Financial Times reported on Sunday. The new price for the Pfizer shot was 19.50 euros (\$23.15) against 15.50 euros previously, the newspaper said, citing portions of the contracts seen.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/pfizer-moderna-raises-prices-its-covid-19-vaccines-eu-ft-2021-08-01/>

Britain to offer vaccine booster shots for 32 million next month

Britain will offer COVID-19 booster vaccines to 32 million Britons starting early next month with up to 2,000 pharmacies set to deliver the programme, The Telegraph reported on Sunday. The campaign could start as soon as Sept. 6, which would see the rollout completed by early December if it goes to

plan, the report added.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-offer-vaccine-booster-shots-32-million-next-month-the-telegraph-2021-08-01/>

Residents: Myanmar leaders use pandemic as political weapon

With coronavirus deaths rising in Myanmar, allegations are growing from residents and human rights activists that the military government, which seized control in February, is using the pandemic to consolidate power and crush opposition. In the last week, the per capita death rate in Myanmar surpassed those of Indonesia and Malaysia to become the worst in Southeast Asia. The country's crippled health care system has rapidly become overwhelmed with new patients sick with COVID-19. Supplies of medical oxygen are running low, and the government has restricted its private sale in many places, saying it is trying to prevent hoarding. But that has led to widespread allegations that the stocks are being directed to government supporters and military-run hospitals.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-coronavirus-pandemic-myanmar-united-nations-12dd43272d9787af52a0d457abce1b7c>

Boris Johnson backs plans to ALLOW thousands of Chinese and Russian jabbed delegates to Cop26

PM gives green light for officials to attend conference in Glasgow later this year. Many have only received unregulated Sinovac, Sinopharm and Sputnik V jabs But plans for an 'amber watch list' for holidays have sparked uproar in Whitehall Ministers warned that the scheme could wreck the hopes of millions of Britons It would see tourists warned while abroad that amber spots could go on red list Spain and Italy could both be placed into the new category as soon as next week

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9846749/Boris-Johnson-backs-plans-ALLOW-thousands-Chinese-Russian-jabbed-delegates-Cop26.html>

Covid-19: Biden tells states to offer \$100 vaccine incentive as cases rise

US President Joe Biden has called for states to offer \$100 (£71) to the newly vaccinated in an effort to address flagging job rates amid virus surges. The president also issued a strict new vaccine requirement for US federal workers, the nation's largest workforce with some two million people. The order requires employees to show proof of vaccination or be subjected to mandatory testing and masking. Just under half of the US is fully vaccinated, according to official data.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-58020090>

Romania plans to deliver vaccines to Ireland in coming weeks

Romania's government has confirmed that it plans to start delivering coronavirus vaccines to Ireland in the coming weeks, rejecting fears that the deal will not go ahead. On July 2nd, Taoiseach Micheál Martin said Ireland would buy 1 million mRNA vaccines after Romanian president Klaus Iohannis said the country was trying to sell vaccines because of low inoculation rates. "We are currently holding technical discussions with our Irish counterparts and we aim at securing the delivery shortly, in the following weeks," Andrei Baci, state secretary at Romania's health ministry, told The Irish Times.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/romania-plans-to-deliver-vaccines-to-ireland-in-coming-weeks-1.4634190>

Maintaining Services

Louisiana hospitals reach capacity as COVID-19 cases surge

Louisiana hospitals are running out of ICU beds as COVID-19 cases surge in the state. Our Lady of Lourdes and Oschner Lafayette General hospitals have run out of ICU beds. Our Lady of Lourdes has resorted to converting regular beds outside of the ICU to deal with the virus, KATC ABC 3 reported. "Part of that reason and why it's such a high percentage of our 70 patients is we're seeing enhanced severity of this illness in these individuals who, many of whom, are otherwise completely healthy," Dr. Henry Kaufman, interim chief medical officer at Our Lady of Lourdes, said at a press briefing.

There are three beds open out of 156 in Region 4 of the state, with more than 1,000 people hospitalized across Louisiana due to the virus, according to the outlet.

<https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/565793-louisiana-hospitals-reach-capacity-as-covid-19-cases-surge>

Covid-19 pandemic: Japan widens emergency over 'frightening' spike

Japan is extending a state of emergency in Tokyo and expanding it to new regions as the Olympic Games host faces a surge in Covid-19 cases. The restrictions are being imposed in areas surrounding the capital as well as in the city of Osaka. Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga warned infections were spreading at an unprecedented rate, urging the country to watch the Games from home. New cases are being fuelled by the more infectious Delta variant.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-58024158>

Vietnam taps private hospitals as Delta-driven COVID-19 infections rise

Private clinics should host COVID-19 patients - ministry. Delta variant 'destroying' pandemic gains - health minister. Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, southern provinces locked down. President warns of 'guilt' over slow vaccine rollout

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/vietnam-taps-private-hospitals-delta-driven-covid-19-infections-rise-2021-07-30/>

First Swedish doses delivered through COVAX

As part of a pledge to deliver at least three million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, the first doses donated by Sweden have been delivered to countries this week, with shipments arriving in Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. Per Olsson Fridh, Minister for International Development Cooperation of Sweden: "Sweden supports a robust multilateral response to the COVID-19 pandemic through COVAX. We have provided over USD 280 million, making Sweden the largest contributor to COVAX per capita." Dr Seth Berkley, CEO, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: "The Government of Sweden is one of the original six donors to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and has steadily increased its support to global vaccination over the past 20 years. In addition to its already-substantial funding of COVAX, Sweden's dose donations will help COVAX reach some of those in urgent need of protection against COVID-19."

<https://www.gavi.org/news/media-room/first-swedish-doses-delivered-through-covax>

Healthcare Innovations

CDC study shows three-fourths of people infected in Massachusetts coronavirus outbreak were vaccinated but few required hospitalization

A sobering scientific analysis published Friday found that three-quarters of the people infected during an explosive coronavirus outbreak fueled by the delta variant were fully vaccinated. The report on the Massachusetts cases, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, offers key evidence bolstering the hypothesis that vaccinated people can spread the more transmissible variant and may be a factor in the summer surge of infections. The data, detailed in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, helped persuade agency scientists to reverse recommendations on mask-wearing and advise that vaccinated individuals wear masks in indoor public settings in some circumstances.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/07/30/provincetown-covid-outbreak-vaccinated/>

Pfizer says immunity can drop to 83% within four months in people who got its COVID-19 shot, further bolstering the company case for a booster

The effectiveness of Pfizer's COVID-19 shot can drop to 83.7% within four to six months after getting the second dose of its vaccine. This is the latest indication that vaccine-induced immunity to the virus can wane and some kind of boost may be necessary in the future.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/markets/pfizer-says-immunity-can-drop-to-83percent-within-four-months-in-people>

[e-who-got-its-covid-19-shot-further-bolstering-the-company-case-for-a-booster/ar-AAMHZHM?ocid=st](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-asia-idUSKBN2F019Y)

'War has changed', CDC says, calling for new response to Delta variant

The war against COVID-19 has changed because of the highly contagious Delta variant, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control said, proposing a clearer message, mandatory vaccines for health workers and a return to universal masking. An internal CDC document said the variant, first detected in India and now dominant across the globe, is as contagious as chickenpox and far more contagious than the common cold or flu. It can be passed on even by vaccinated people, and may cause more serious disease than earlier coronavirus strains. The document, entitled "Improving communications around vaccine breakthrough and vaccine effectiveness", said the variant required a new approach to help the public understand the danger - including making clear that unvaccinated people were more than 10 times more likely than those who are vaccinated to become seriously ill or die.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-asia-idUSKBN2F019Y>

New research links COVID-19 and signs of Alzheimer's disease

There is growing concern about the effects of COVID-19 on many parts of a person's body besides the respiratory system. Researchers have shown that COVID-19 symptoms can persist after recovery and lead to neurological problems. Research presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference (AAIC) 2021 further confirms these findings, including making links between COVID-19 and signs of Alzheimer's disease.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/cognitive-dysfunction-linked-to-covid-19>

Pregnant women urged to get Covid jab amid rise in hospital admissions

England's top midwife is urging expectant mums to get the Covid-19 vaccine as soon as possible, as new data suggests a worrying rise in Covid-19 hospital admissions among unvaccinated pregnant women in the UK. There is also evidence that the Delta variant poses a significantly greater risk to pregnant women than previous strains. The data suggests that the overwhelming majority (98%) of 171 pregnant women hospitalised with coronavirus symptoms since mid-May had not received a Covid-19 vaccine, compared to just three women who had received a first dose, and no fully vaccinated pregnant women.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/30/pregnant-women-urged-to-get-covid-jab-amid-rise-in-hospital-admissions>

U.S. CDC internal report says Delta variant as contagious as chickenpox - report

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has described the Delta variant of the coronavirus as being as transmissible as chickenpox and cautioned it could cause severe disease, the Washington Post said, citing an internal CDC document.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/us-cdc-internal-report-calls-delta-variant-contagious-chickenpox-nyt-2021-07-30/>

More than 100K vaccine breakthroughs identified in US: report

There have been more than 100,000 breakthrough cases, or cases where fully vaccinated individuals contracted the coronavirus, identified in the U.S., according to a Bloomberg analysis. Bloomberg has gathered data from 35 states since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) stopped tracking all breakthrough cases and found that more than 111,000 breakthrough cases have occurred in those states within the past two months. There are more than 164 million Americans fully vaccinated against the coronavirus.

<https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/565702-cdc-stopped-tracking-breakthrough-cases-as-delta-variant-spread>

Perspex screens 'may increase Covid-19 transmission risk if wrongly positioned'

Covid secure" perspex screens in workplaces may increase risk of virus transmission if they are placed in positions that block airflow or cause poor circulation, scientists advising the Government

have warned. In an undated document released on Friday by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage), the experts said there is very little overall evidence on the effectiveness of these barriers at reducing infection transmission through droplets.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/experts-government-sage-scientific-advisory-group-for-emergencies-world-health-organisation-b948497.html>