

Connecting Communities for COVID19 News

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Isolation Tips

People who stayed home before lockdown likely helped slow spread of COVID-19: Researchers

A new study has found that people who were proactive and stayed home even before lockdown orders were implemented in the United States may have helped slow the spread of the novel coronavirus back in March and April. The study, published Wednesday in the Lancet, shows that in the 25 most affected U.S. counties, people started staying home more than would be typical nearly a full week to a month prior to their state's stay-at-home policies were put in place. The decrease in movement was strongly correlated with reduced COVID-19 case growth in those counties during March and April. This suggests that social distancing prior to policy enforcement played an important role in controlling the spread of the virus.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/people-stayed-home-lockdown-helped-slow-spread-covid/story?id=71566229>

India's visually impaired population grapples with Covid-19 challenges

For millions of Indians who suffer from visual impairments, the new Covid-19 normal poses new hardships in everyday life – such as how to respect social distancing rules when you can't see. Mahesh Jain, an office clerk who works in Nariman Point, the commercial hub of Mumbai, wonders what life will be like under the new hygiene restrictions aimed at limiting the spread of the coronavirus. "I dread the day when I need to get back to office," Jain, who was born blind, tells RFI. "Will there be someone to help me cross the road or board the crowded train to get to work? These questions bother me a great deal." Touch is essential for the visually impaired and contactless mobility is a world unknown to them.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/visually-impaired-people-india-grapple-121812602.html>

South Africans unhappier than Australians, New Zealanders over lockdown experience

A comparative well-being study between South Africa, New Zealand and Australia has found that South Africans were the least happy with the strict lockdown regulations. Researchers performed the study to explore the effect that lockdown has had on people's happiness.

<https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/south-africans-unhappier-than-australians-new-zealanders-over-lockdown-experience-50235332>

Locked down and liquored up: Research reveals the truth about Australians' drinking during COVID-19

Researchers at the University of South Australia's Ehrenberg Bass Institute for Marketing Science have found that despite predictions that the lockdown might cause a spike in alcohol consumption, the truth is, there was very little change in people's drinking habits during the restrictions. Not only did overall wine consumption rates remain reasonably stable, but people tended to buy their wine from the same places and drink wine on the same occasions. In a new paper—How has wine and alcohol purchasing and consumption changed during COVID-19 isolation in Australia? – UniSA researchers found that across red and white wine, beer and spirits, only 15 to 18 percent of respondents reported drinking more often than before lockdown. Between 82 and 85 percent of those surveyed were consuming none, less or about the same of all types of alcohol as they were before the lockdown.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-07-liquored-reveals-truth-australians-covid-.html>

Hygiene Helpers

Coronavirus: Labour call for free flu vaccines for over-50s this winter to prevent 'perfect storm'

Sir Keir Starmer wants 10 million more people to be offered a flu jab as part of efforts to protect the NHS this winter as we ride out the coronavirus storm at the same time

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-labour-call-for-free-flu-vaccines-for-over-50s-this-winter-to-prevent-perfect-storm-12019902>

High-flying facemasks arrive at Mexican hospitals by drone

To eliminate the risk of contagious human beings, a Mexican company has launched a drone delivery service to get clean medical supplies to hospitals during the coronavirus pandemic. Mexico-City based firm Sincronia Logistica has begun deploying unmanned drones to deliver personal protective gear and other essential equipment to public hospitals in the central state of Queretaro, north of the capital. Mexican healthcare workers have staged protests nationwide over the lack of personal protective equipment. The drones help stem the spread of the novel coronavirus by allowing for quick, contact-free drop-offs. "In addition to reducing time, we've also reduced human contact," said Diego Garcia, director of business excellence at Sincronia Logistica. The innovation comes as the pandemic has surged in Mexico to give the country the sixth-highest death toll worldwide, with some 28,510 confirmed COVID-19 fatalities.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-mexico-drones/high-flying-facemasks-arrive-at-mexican-hospitals-by-drone-idUKKBN24335M>

This WHO-UNICEF Initiative Is Fighting so Everyone Can Wash Their Hands Against COVID-19

It's often been said that changing personal behaviour is vital in containing COVID-19: wearing a mask in public, maintaining social distance, and frequently washing hands with soap and clean water. Yet for 3 billion people globally, access to hygiene is not as simple as turning on a tap, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). That's 40% of the world population who cannot wash their hands with soap and water in their homes.

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/who-unicef-hand-washing-covid/>

Trump administration calls for masks throughout air travel, other guidelines for Covid-19 era

The guidelines include notifying passengers about mask requirements and collecting passenger contact information. Airlines are grappling with how to keep travelers and crews safe in the coronavirus pandemic. The federal guidelines also recommended masks be worn by all onboard but stopped short of requiring social distancing on flights.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/02/trump-administration-issues-guidelines-for-air-travel-stops-short-of-social-distancing-onboard.html>

Coronavirus NI: Face coverings to be made mandatory on all public transport in NI

The Northern Ireland Executive has approved the mandatory wearing of face coverings on all forms of public transport from July 10.

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-ni-face-coverings-be-made-mandatory-all-public-transport-ni-2901863>

Warning of 'Super-spreaders' in Spain's Andalusia, after over 90% of Covid-19 carriers showed no symptoms as health boss insists the virus is still here

Carlos Bautista appealed to the public to adhere to health measures, including washing hands, wearing masks and using hand sanitiser whenever possible to prevent the spread of Covid-19

<https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2020/07/02/warning-of-super-spreaders-in-spains-andalusia-after-over-90-of>

[-covid-19-carriers-showed-no-symptoms-as-health-boss-insists-the-virus-is-still-here/](#)

Community Activities

'Cuddle curtains' are going global amid the coronavirus pandemic

Social distancing during lockdowns has ruined the beauty of the hug. But many people have come up with a way to hug safely, the “cuddle curtain.” The idea has caught on and is now being seen across the world.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/02/cuddle-curtains-are-going-global-amid-the-coronavirus-pandemic.html>

The kid next door: Neighborhood friendships on a comeback amid the coronavirus pandemic

Children's social worlds have been upended by the suspension of school and extracurricular activities due to the pandemic. Many older children and adolescents have been able to maintain their friendships over social media. But, for younger children, this approach is less likely to be available to them and less likely to meet their social needs. In some places, a silver lining of Covid-19 may well be the resurgence of childhood friendships in American neighborhoods.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/02/health/neighborhood-friendships-kids-coronavirus-wellness/index.html>

Preseason Workouts Provide Frightening Preview for Colleges

In recent weeks, universities across the country have conducted an unplanned experiment on whether students can return to campus this fall, using football players and other athletes reporting for voluntary workouts as guinea pigs. It hasn't gone very well. The University of Texas at Austin had 13 student-athletes test positive for Covid-19. At Louisiana State University, 30 players—about a quarter of the football team—went into quarantine after some of them hit local bars. And the University of South Carolina reported 79 new cases among students in a recent eight-day stretch, but won't say whether athletes have been infected. The troubling results show how challenging it will be to bring tens of thousands of young adults together for the resumption of classes in a few weeks. Many players who tested positive for the virus showed no symptoms. And in numerous cases, students ignored pleas from administrators to avoid crowds, contributing to a rise in positive tests. “Students are going to be returning to parties, there are going to be all sorts of things,” said Dr. Carlos Del Rio, an infectious disease expert at Emory University School of Medicine. “As long as those things happen you can do whatever you want to test people, but people are going to get infected.”

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/pre-season-workouts-provide-frightening-preview-for-colleges-11593698203>

Alabama students 'throw coronavirus parties with prize money for who gets infected first'

Students in Alabama are reportedly throwing "coronavirus parties" where guests are challenged to see who will get infected the quickest. Tuscaloosa City Councillor Sonya McKinstry has shared concerning reports that students are intentionally inviting people infected with Covid-19 to parties in the city of Tuscaloosa and surrounding areas. Ms McKinstry told city council members the students put money in a pot as a reward for the first person who gets infected with the disease. She told ABC News: "They put money in a pot and they try to get Covid. Whoever gets Covid first gets the pot. It makes no sense."

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/alabama-students-coronavirus-parties-a4487056.html>

Working Remotely

New normal of remote working sees more than half of innovation budgets cut

Nearly one-fifth of tech executives have seen significant reductions in their innovation budgets because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the working remotely factor says report

<https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252485593/New-normal-of-remote-working-sees-more-than-half-of-innovation>

[n-budgets-cut](#)

5 Amazing remote work practices during COVID-19

COVID-19 has pushed every professional into WFH. Try these 5 amazing remote work practices to elevate your work experience and be successful working remotely.

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/5-amazing-remote-work-practices-during-covid-19/>

Is the Five-Day Office Week Over?

Most American office workers are in no hurry to return to the office full time, even after the coronavirus is under control. But that doesn't mean they want to work from home forever. The future for them, a variety of new data shows, is likely to be workweeks split between office and home. Recent surveys show that both employees and employers support this arrangement. And research suggests that a couple of days a week at each location is the magic number to cancel out the negatives of each arrangement while reaping the benefits of both.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/02/upshot/is-the-five-day-office-week-over.html>

Remote working gets a big boost, but... - News

It might be a startling figure but the fact that 80 per cent of the respondents in a survey conducted by global staffing firm Robert Half vote for working from home brings that option back to life. Their grounds for such a support is that they save time and money and are more productive. As salaries are pared and liquidity low the saving of money in commuting is a strong driver for not venturing out. It is also arguable that as many as two hours plus are lost waiting for, and in, transportation. That is almost 30 per cent of a work day. Also up for grabs is the productivity angle. The concentration in an office under supervision and with peers, subordinates and bosses should logically be higher. That such a vast majority feels otherwise needs more exploration to ensure it is not the sloth of dressing up, shaving, doing early morning 'before we go' chores so that we eliminate the possibility that this keenness to stay home is not motivated by laziness.

<https://www.khaleejtimes.com/coronavirus-pandemic/remote-working-gets-a-big-boost-but>

Virtual Classrooms

DC Universities Plan For An Unpredictable Fall As Coronavirus Cases Surge Nationwide

So far, American University, Catholic University, George Washington University, and Howard University have laid out plans for on-campus living and classes that limit campus density. (Disclosure: AU holds the license for DCist's parent company, WAMU.) Gallaudet University and the University of the District of Columbia say they will stick with distance learning only, for now. Meanwhile, Georgetown University hasn't released its fall plans. The varying scenarios are the result of strategic planning by each individual university, according to Sarah Van Orman, the chief health officer at the University of Southern California and a member of the American College Health Association's coronavirus task force. The association has helped schools like AU design their reopening plans, and in May it released a 20-page report outlining best practices.

<https://dcist.com/story/20/07/02/dc-universities-fall-campus-plans-coronavirus/>

SC online learning program expects uptick from COVID-19 pandemic

Stephanie Walters has been teaching virtually for more than seven years. "I saw some fantastic examples of how teachers transitioned to brick-and-mortar classrooms to engaging with their students online," Walters said. Walters is one of the 40 full-time teachers working for VirtualSC. VirtualSC is a state-sponsored, free online program. It's open to middle and high school students in public, private, and home schools. It also offers adult education. According to Director Bradley Mitchell, the program has seen steady growth in enrollment over the last few years. He said this fall they are gearing up for a big increase. They won't know the exact numbers until the enrollment period happens in August.

<https://www.wrdw.com/2020/07/02/sc-online-learning-program-expects-uptick-from-covid-19-pandemic/>

Miami-Dade Schools will require mandatory masks when school begins

On the same day authorities took new steps to address the recent surge in Florida COVID-19 cases, Miami-Dade County Public Schools signed off on a plan Wednesday to reopen schools this fall, calling for smaller classes, a mix of in-person, online and hybrid teaching models and masks mandated for all.

<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/education/article243924812.html>

Coronavirus: virtual tours prove a hit as UAE schools look to welcome new pupils in September

Schools in the UAE are setting up online tours for parents and pupils looking to move schools. Due to the pandemic, many school officials said they had to tweak their enrolment process to offer parents more flexibility. While some schools have noted a reduction in overseas applications, others reported more pupils were transferring from local competitors. Despite the current climate, many private schools are set to welcome hundreds of new pupils from September. Al Salam Community School in Dubai, which opened in September 2019, received many requests from parents and pupils looking to join after the summer break. "We opened with just under 800 pupils and we are expecting to welcome at least 300 new pupils in September," Kausor Amin-Ali, founding principal, told The National. "We have seen the majority of applicants moving to us from the more premium sector of the education market.

<https://www.thenational.ae/uae/education/coronavirus-virtual-tours-prove-a-hit-as-uae-schools-look-to-welcome-new-pupils-in-september-1.1043041>

Lubbock ISD offering choice between virtual school, face to face instruction in fall

Adults will wear masks except when giving direct instruction and students will wear masks "as appropriate." "We will practice social distancing and we will develop schedules that limit large groups." The district is also modifying transportation to allow social distancing on buses. Rollo said there will be fewer students on each bus, one per row. Rollo said the district now has devices available for all students. Pre-K and Kindergarten students will have iPads and students in first through twelfth grade will have Chromebooks. These devices will be used in the classroom but will also allow a "quick shift to remote instruction if the need arises."

<https://www.kcbd.com/2020/07/02/lubbock-isd-offering-choice-between-virtual-school-face-face-instruction-fall/>

Public Policies

Will Europe or the US Recover Faster from Coronavirus?

After the devastating financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, the United States recovered much more quickly than Europe, which suffered a double-dip recession. This time, many economists say that Europe may have the edge. The main reason America did well was the rapid response of the government and the flexible nature of the American economy, quick both to fire workers but also to hire them again. Europe, with built-in social insurance, tries to keep workers from layoffs through subsidies to employers, making it harder to fire and more expensive to rehire. But this is a different kind of collapse, a mandated shutdown in response to a pandemic, driving down both supply and demand simultaneously. And that difference creates the possibility that the European response, freezing the economy in place, might work better this time.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/world/europe/coronavirus-europe-usa.html>

China urges coronavirus testing capacity ramp-up in preparation for potential outbreaks

China's local governments and medical institutes should ramp up and reserve coronavirus testing capacity in preparation for increased demand amid potential outbreaks, national health authorities said on Thursday. Local authorities should have emergency response plans to be able to swiftly

expand nucleic test capacity, the National Health Commission said in a guideline on its website. Nucleic acid test results should be delivered within six hours for patients at fever clinics and within a day for those who volunteer to be tested, according to the guideline.

<https://www.devdiscourse.com/article/health/1114617-china-urges-coronavirus-testing-capacity-ramp-up-in-preparation-for-potential-outbreaks>

Coronavirus: Leicester lockdown 'risks creating uncertainty and disorder', scientists warn

The lockdown in Leicester was imposed too late and "risks creating uncertainty, dissent and even disorder", a group of scientists has warned. Independent SAGE - a rival group that is separate to the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies which advises Downing Street - described the local lockdown as a "foreseeable crisis of the government's own making". It said the situation in Leicester was "both predictable and avoidable" and that it expected to see "spikes" of infection in other towns and cities. The group said the Leicester coronavirus outbreak was a consequence of "the premature lifting of lockdown restrictions at a time when the virus is still circulating widely in some areas" and the lack of a functioning test, trace and isolate system in place.

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-leicester-lockdown-risks-creating-uncertainty-and-disorder-scientists-warn-12019610>

People attempting to flee Leicester lockdown zone could face £100 fine

People attempting to flee Leicester amid the local lockdown could face fines, police have warned. Amid widespread confusion about how the new rules will work, it has emerged that officers will issue fines — believed to be up to £100 — as a last resort for those who breach the coronavirus restrictions in the Midlands city. Nottinghamshire Police said it would be working with British Transport Police to ensure people are not leaving on trains from Leicester to visit Nottingham. Anyone spotted travelling out of Leicester will be stopped and asked to return home, with financial penalties issued as a 'last resort'. Craig Guildford, chief constable of Nottinghamshire Police, said his officers will also be working with Leicestershire Police, with any intelligence of minibuses or coaches coming into the city being stopped.

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/07/01/people-attempting-flee-leicester-lockdown-zone-face-100-fine-12928373/>

Kazakhstan to implement softer second lockdown over COVID-19

Kazakhstan will close some non-essential businesses, limit travel between provinces, cut public transit hours of operation and ban public gatherings for two weeks starting from July 5, the government said on Thursday. The measures aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus in the Central Asian country may be tightened or extended later, the cabinet said in a statement

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-kazakhstan/kazakhstan-to-implement-softer-second-lockdown-over-covid-19-idUSS0N2DV00B>

Australia Thought the Virus Was Under Control. It Found a Vulnerable Spot.

Ring Mayar spends all day knocking on doors in the western suburbs of Melbourne, asking residents if they have a cough, a fever or chills. Even if they do not, he encourages them to get tested for the coronavirus, as the authorities race to catch up with a string of outbreaks that is threatening to recast Australia's success story in controlling the spread. "It's quite daunting," said Mr. Mayar, the president of the South Sudanese Community Association in the state of Victoria, who has been volunteering in one of the largely immigrant communities where cases are surging. The rise in infections — Victoria reported 77 new cases Thursday, the most since March — has driven home the outsized impact of the coronavirus on communities in which working-class immigrants and essential workers are particularly vulnerable to the disease. In these places, people often must venture out for jobs that put them at risk of contracting the virus, and communication by the authorities in residents' native languages can be patchy.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/02/world/australia/melbourne-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

India's coronavirus cases cross 600,000 amid easing of lockdowns

India's coronavirus infections surpassed 600,000 on Thursday, with 17,834 deaths, as authorities battled to contain the pandemic while easing lockdown rules, officials and the health ministry said. Fresh challenges to protect people from the virus emerged for disaster management officials in the northeast state of Assam amid torrential rainfall, where floods and landslides killed 57 people this week and more than 1.5 million were forced to flee their homes. Assam's health minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, said the state had started testing aggressively to identify coronavirus cases among villagers forced to take shelter in community halls, schools and government buildings. "We were isolating new coronavirus hotspots; the situation is very critical," Sarma told Reuters. The increase in infections presents a severe challenge for India's strained medical capacity and overburdened health system.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-india/indias-coronavirus-cases-cross-600000-amid-easing-of-lockdowns-idUKKBN2430HB>

Lockdown has been eased too soon - and was never strict enough - warns Dr Fauci

Anthony Fauci has warned that America's coronavirus lockdown was lifted too soon, was never strict enough in the first place, and that young people are driving a second wave that has seen daily infections top 50,000. Dr Fauci, the White House's top virus adviser, said the 'very disturbing' new rise in cases is being caused in part by the fact that the US never got its first wave under control - only locking down around 50 per cent of the country compared to 97 per cent as happened in most of Europe where daily infections are now very low. That meant that when the economy started to reopen, the virus began spreading rapidly almost immediately because there were still a large number infected people to pass the disease along, he told BBC Radio 4 in the UK.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8482593/Lockdown-eased-soon-never-strict-warns-Dr-Fauci.html>

'Bubbles' - How England plans to reopen schools to all pupils

All pupils in England will be expected to return to school in September as part of government plans unveiled on Thursday, which include dividing students into separate groups to limit the spread of COVID-19. Schools will be asked to maintain distinct student groups, known as bubbles, which strive to not mix with pupils in other bubbles. They could be the size of a class or a year group. This makes it easier to pinpoint who needs to self-isolate if there is a positive case and will keep that number to a minimum, the education ministry said. Officials acknowledge younger children will not be able to maintain social distancing and that could be challenging for everyone when using shared facilities such as dining halls, toilets and playgrounds.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-education/factbox-bubbles-how-england-plans-to-reopen-schools-to-all-pupils-idUKKBN2431HR>

Cuban capital to ease lockdown, joins rest of the country

Cuba said on Wednesday it will begin easing a pandemic lockdown on Havana on Friday, while most of the rest of the country will move to phase two of a three-phase process towards normalization. The capital's 2.2 million residents will once more be able to move around on public and private transport, go to the beach and other recreation centers, and enjoy a seaside drive just in time for the summer break. They can also dine and have a drink, although social distancing and wearing masks remain mandatory. Optional medical and other services will also resume. Only a handful of COVID-19 cases were reported in Cuba last month, all but a few in Havana. Most of the Caribbean island, home to 11.2 million inhabitants, has been free of the disease for more than a month.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-cuba-lockdown/cuban-capital-to-ease-lockdown-joins-rest-of-the-country-idUKKBN24307L?il=0>

Israel FinMin opposes return to lockdown despite spike in infections

Israeli Finance Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday he opposed returning to a nationwide

lockdown despite a surge in new coronavirus cases, citing the economic pressures of a prolonged closure. "We will not compromise on health considerations but we will not return to a situation where the economy will be closed," Katz told a news conference. He argued that increased enforcement of existing rules, which include wearing masks and social distancing, was more reasonable for the time being than a shutdown.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-israel-economy/israel-finmin-opposes-return-to-lockdown-despite-spike-in-infections-idUSL8N2E84OP>

Border town pays price for Sweden's no-lockdown as Norway reopens

The Swedish border town of Stromstad is paying a heavy price for Sweden's decision not to lock down its economy like neighbouring Norway and other Nordic nations to halt the spread of COVID-19. Stromstad is just a two-hour drive from Oslo and popular with Norwegians who shop for cheaper consumer goods in Sweden, but Norway's lockdown, imposed in mid-March, put a stop to that. And now, though Norway has lifted its lockdown following a sharp fall in COVID-19 cases, it still quarantines people returning from Sweden, which has registered more than four times the combined number of deaths in Norway, Denmark and Finland. "When Norway closed its borders, (Stromstad) went overnight from full activity to total stillness," said Kent Hansson, the town's mayor. "The border retail trade, it is (still) completely dead. The large supermarkets close to the border are completely deserted." Sweden kept most businesses and schools open when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, bucking the international trend.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-norway-sweden/border-town-pays-price-for-swedens-no-lockdown-as-norway-reopens-idUKKBN2431A9>

Sweden's prime minister orders an inquiry into the failure of the country's no-lockdown coronavirus strategy

Sweden's prime minister has ordered an inquiry into the country's decision not to impose a coronavirus lockdown after the country suffered thousands more deaths than its closest neighbours. "We have thousands of dead" Swedish PM Stefan Lofven said at a press conference on Wednesday, while admitting the country's handling had exposed Sweden's shortcomings, The Times reported. "The question now is how Sweden should change not if"

<https://www.businessinsider.in/politics/world/news/swedens-prime-minister-orders-an-inquiry-into-the-failure-of-the-countrys-no-lockdown-coronavirus-strategy/articleshow/76751451.cms>

Uruguay rides out COVID threat without imposing a lockdown

Uruguay's president was recently photographed surfing in the early morning ahead of a cabinet meeting, symbolizing his government's relief that a policy of "freedom with responsibility" in containing the COVID-19 pandemic is succeeding. Photos of 47-year-old Luis Lacalle Pou emerging from the South Atlantic in a wetsuit with a board under his arm and a smile on his lips hit the newsstands on Tuesday, as Europe reopened its borders to 15 countries. The list included only one Latin American country: Uruguay. With less than 1,000 registered novel coronavirus cases and just 27 deaths, the country of 3.4 million is a notable exception in a region that has become the epicenter of the global health crisis. Uruguay currently has just 83 active cases, while its giant neighbor Brazil is the world's worst-hit country after the United States.

<https://www.france24.com/en/20200702-uruguay-rides-out-covid-threat-without-imposing-a-lockdown>

Maintaining Services

Dozens of Educators Exposed to Coronavirus During School Reopening Meeting

Dozens of educators in Northern California were asked to quarantine after they were exposed to COVID-19 during an in-person school reopening meeting last month. A leadership team with the Santa Clara Unified School District met in person on June 19 to discuss strategies to help schools open safely in the fall, district superintendent Stella Kemp said during a virtual board meeting last

week. Though many meetings held among school officials have been conducted online due to the continuing threat of the pandemic, Kemp said the complexity of the district's path to reopening required in-person discussions.

<https://www.newsweek.com/dozens-educators-exposed-coronavirus-during-school-reopening-meeting-1515148>

How COVID-19 is disrupting UK's transport network

A study by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) has highlighted that preferences for working and socialising remotely post-lockdown will see a move away, at least in the short term, from the infrastructure demand patterns that existed prior to the pandemic. Drawing on YouGov polling data, ICE found that 61 per cent of UK adults support increasing the frequency of remote working. Some 32 per cent think there should be a transition to a permanent at-home working environment where possible, while 44 per cent are likely to avoid travelling on public transport networks.

<https://www.raconteur.net/business-innovation/uk-transport-patterns>

Covid will change University life, predicts Pearson boss

He argues that with children unable to go to school it will speed up the move towards online learning and for a mix of digital and classroom tuition, which could augur well for Pearson if it can take advantage. 'The virus will accelerate changes that are already happening including the trend for online learning which is the whole focus of our business for the past decade,' he says. He and his successor will have to hope so. Although Cevian does not share the aggressive approach of its US counterparts, it does want faster progress from Pearson, whose attempts to transform itself have been a long-running disappointment.

<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-8484437/Covid-change-University-life-predicts-Pearson-boss.html>

End of lockdown fails to boost jobs market in Spain

The end of the coronavirus lockdown in Spain failed to bring a surge in employment as government data showed that the 900,000 jobs lost at the pandemic's peak had not been regained, while the tourism sector has not yet returned to regular activity. The number of people in Spain registering as jobless rose by 0.13% in June from a month earlier, or by 5,017 people, leaving 3.86 million people out of work, Labour Ministry data showed on Thursday. The number of registered jobless people had risen in May by 0.68%. Overall there were 847,197 more jobless people in June than in the same month a year ago. A net 99,906 jobs were lost in June. According to data from the Social Security Ministry, on average 68,208 new jobs were registered in June compared to May, but 161,500 people were fired on the last day of the month.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/finance/markets/end-of-lockdown-fails-to-boost-jobs-market-in-spain/ar-BB16fp6A>

Return to class to be reviewed 'day-by-day' as school spread widens

Victoria's Chief Health Officer will review the planned reopening of schools within Melbourne's locked-down suburbs as new evidence of recent student-to-student transmission of COVID-19 emerges. Professor Brett Sutton said he still expected schools in the lockdown zones to return to face-to-face learning at the start of term three, but that he wanted a reduction in transmission rates. "It will certainly be reviewed on a day-to-day basis. I will give as much notice as I can around the resumption of school in those restricted postcodes," Professor Sutton said. The Chief Health Officer said there was evidence of student-to-student and especially teacher-to-teacher transmission.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/return-to-class-to-be-reviewed-day-by-day-as-school-spread-widens-20200702-p558da.html>

How will schools return safely in September?

All pupils should be back in school in England by September under new government guidelines announced on Thursday by the education secretary. From the beginning of the autumn term, limits on attendance will be lifted to allow schools to open at full capacity, and schools and colleges are being asked to return to a full curriculum ahead of exams next summer. But, after several false

starts, how will schools open safely to all pupils after the summer break according to the latest government blue print set out by Gavin Williamson on Thursday.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2020-07-02/how-will-schools-return-safely-in-september>

Star Alliance airlines agree to common set of health and hygiene standards

The 26 member airlines of Star Alliance have agreed to a common set of health and hygiene safety measures. These measures include providing passengers with hygiene kits; requiring or recommending passengers to wear face masks during boarding and de-boarding, and throughout the flight; announcing or displaying signs on mandatory requirements to minimise the risk of spreading coronavirus infections during a flight; adopting operating procedures for cases where a passenger develops or displays coronavirus symptoms during a flight; providing operating crew with personal protective equipment; and cleaning or disinfecting aircraft at “relevant intervals”.

<https://www.businesstraveller.com/business-travel/2020/07/02/star-alliance-airlines-agree-to-common-set-of-health-and-hygiene-standards/>

Home test results are taking so long 'they render tracing scheme useless'

Half of coronavirus tests carried out in the community are taking four days as standard to return results, it has emerged as the Government misses its 24 hour target. Home testing of symptomatic cases, which has accounted for more than 2.7 million tests in the official statistics, is taking so long that it is rendering the track and trace system useless, scientists have warned. The Daily Telegraph can disclose that even if every part of the process runs to the plan, it will be around 96 hours after the original case develops symptoms before the contact tracing process even begins.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/07/01/half-coronavirus-tests-members-public-take-four-days/>

Schools in Thailand reopen with strict hygiene rules

After months of closure due to COVID-19, schools across Thailand reopened on Wednesday under hygiene guidelines and attendance restrictions to prevent the coronavirus outbreak. Schools put attendance limits determined from their facility capacities and class sizes. They have accommodated social distancing and conduct strict health screening in the wake of the pandemic. Public Health Ministry’s social distancing rule allows only one pupil in a four-square-meter classroom space. Therefore, in most cases, students are divided into two groups taking turns to attend their classes. Pupils and parents have to adjust to the regulations and new environment. Many said they were excited with “back to school” under the new rules.

<https://www.pattayamail.com/ourchildren/schools-in-thailand-reopen-with-strict-hygiene-rules-306193>

American lockdown exceptionalism

As the number of COVID-19 cases starts to rise again in many U.S. states, the question is whether residents of those states will tolerate another lockdown. I used to think so, but it is increasingly clear that Americans have become comfortable with a remarkably high number of casualties. There is a mechanism of social conformity at work here. Most people will not tolerate a small risk to their lives to dine out, for instance — but they might if all their friends are doing the same. The appeal of a restaurant isn’t just the food, it’s the shared experience and the sense that others are doing it, too. The danger lies in the potential for ratchet effects. If hardly anyone is eating out or going to bars, you might be able to endure the deprivation. But once others have started doing something, you will probably feel compelled to join them, even at greater risk to your life.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2020/07/01/commentary/world-commentary/american-lockdown-exceptionalism/>

How Coronavirus Will Reshape US Cities

The pandemic will likely accelerate the pull of the suburbs for families while pushing young people and businesses into more affordable urban areas.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2020-07-02/how-coronavirus-will-reshape-u-s-cities>

Q&A: 'We are only at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic' - Prof. Peter Piot

We're only at the start of the coronavirus pandemic although the second wave may take a different form to the first one, says veteran virologist Professor Peter Piot, who has spent the past 40 years tracking down and fighting viruses. Prof. Piot, who helped discover Ebola at age 27 and has led the fight against HIV and AIDS, contracted coronavirus earlier this year. The director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the UK, and a special advisor on coronavirus to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen spoke to Horizon about how having Covid-19 changed his perspective on the illness, why we need a vaccine and the long-term impacts of the pandemic.

<https://horizon-magazine.eu/article/qa-we-are-only-beginning-coronavirus-pandemic-prof-peter-piot.html>

Healthcare Innovations

Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine shows positive results

An experimental COVID-19 vaccine being created by America's pharmaceutical giant, Pfizer, and the German firm, BioNTech, activated immune responses in receivers more than individuals naturally recovering from an infection, according to a small journal published online yesterday. However, the research work has not yet been certified by other medical experts and it is still unknown what degree of immune response will protect an individual from falling sick. Still, medical experts praised Pfizer for publishing the data on 45 people and said the results encouraged moving to a larger clinical trial to test if the COVID-19 vaccine is actually safe and effective for humans. "It's the first positive data I've seen coming out of Operation Warp Speed," Peter Jay Hotez, dean for the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine said to Washington Post, referring to the U.S. government effort to speed up the development, testing, and production of multiple coronavirus vaccines. "I'm really happy Pfizer took the initiative to publish it, whereas the others haven't. I think we need to see more of this."

<https://nairametrics.com/2020/07/02/pfizers-covid-19-vaccine-shows-positive-results/>

Covaxin: COVID-19 vaccine candidate cleared for human trials |

In a record feat, India's Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine (Covaxin) has been approved for human trials, making it India's first domestic candidate to get the green light from the government's drug regulator as reported by Aljazeera. However, no vaccine has yet been approved for commercial use against the COVID-19 virus, as some COVID-19 vaccines from more than 100 different candidates worldwide are being tested on humans. The Drug Controller-General of India has approved the Bharat Biotech's application to conduct a Phase I and II clinical trial of Covaxin, which was developed along with the Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Virology, the company said in a statement yesterday. Human clinical trials are scheduled to begin in India next month for the vaccine, which was developed and manufactured in Bharat Biotech's facility at Genome Valley in Hyderabad, India.

<https://nairametrics.com/2020/06/30/covaxin-covid-19-vaccine-candidate-cleared-for-human-trials/>

How lockdown stopped the virus in Italy

Previous studies have shown that many severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) cases were tied to asymptomatic carriers or those who do not manifest symptoms of the viral infection. Now, a new study reveals that in the first Italian town hit by the virus, as much as 40 percent of the population had no symptoms of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The researchers at the University of Padua and Imperial College London revealed that many people in the town of Vo, northern Italy, and the first one to be locked down in Europe due to the coronavirus outbreak, had been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, but did not display any symptoms. The results add to previous data that the number of those who had contracted the virus may be higher than what the official tally shows.

<https://www.news-medical.net/news/20200701/How-lockdown-stopped-the-virus-in-Italy.aspx>

Russian fund steps up production of anti-viral drug approved by Moscow for COVID-19

Russia's sovereign wealth fund said on Thursday it will step up the production of the anti-viral drug Avifavir, an anti-influenza medicine which the Russian government has granted preliminary approval for treatment of COVID-19 patients. The Russian health ministry gave its approval for the drug's use under a special accelerated process in May. Its Russian backers say it has shown a benefit in COVID-19 patients in early research. The first 100,000 treatment courses were delivered last month to 35 Russian regions, as well as to neighbouring Belarus, said the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) which has promoted the drug. RDIF said it was now set to produce more than 100,000 courses in July and that a joint venture with pharmaceutical firm ChemRar Group would allow it to increase production threefold to meet growing demand both domestically and internationally

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-russia-flights/update-1-russian-fund-steps-up-production-of-anti-viral-drug-approved-by-moscow-for-covid-19-idUSL8N2E93EP>

Oxford COVID-19 vaccine safe for people with weak immunity says Oxford Professor Sarah Gilbert

Volunteers have begun participating in Brazil's first clinical trial of Oxford COVID-19 vaccine. The ChAdOx1 vaccine technology is based on an adenovirus and it is considered very safe, even in people with a weak immune system. "We have removed some of the adenovirus genes, so that when we use it as a vaccine, the adenovirus cannot spread through the body. That makes it very safe, even in people with a weak immune system. But because it is a live virus, it is good at inducing a strong immune response after vaccination," said Professor Sarah Gilbert, Nuffield Department of Medicine, Oxford University. Gilbert gave a short talk while participating in an informal discussion with ambassadors of the UN member states.

<https://www.businessinsider.in/india/news/oxford-covid-19-vaccine-safe-for-people-with-weak-immunity/articleshow/76728237.cms>