

# Overview of Year 3 of COVID-19

Nov. 24  
Day 739

Year 3  
of COVID-19

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- Signs of Virus
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- Good News!
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Number of days since first sign of virus

731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780

<p><b>Nov. 16, 2021</b></p> <p>Report: UK disposes of 600,000 vaccine doses after they pass expiration date</p>	<p><b>Nov. 16, 2021</b></p> <p>Delta variant detected on 89.7% of sequenced tests worldwide</p>	<p><b>Nov. 19, 2021</b></p> <p>Ukraine's doctors pushed to the limit by COVID-19 wave</p>	<p><b>Nov. 24, 2021</b></p> <p>Covid rebound in U.S. is as bad as last November's in some spots</p>
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Complete timelines for Year 1 and Year 2 can be downloaded from our website



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The following pages contain a full size timeline with live links to our sources

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732

733

734

735

736

737

738

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Today

739	740	741	742	743	744	745	746	747	748	749	750	751	752
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Nov. 24, 2021 

**Covid rebound in U.S. is as bad as last November's in some spots**

Nov. 16, 2021

## Report: UK disposed of 600,000 AZ vaccine doses after they passed expiry date

Oxfam has described this as an “absolute scandal”, as the **government did not donate the doses to poorer countries with low rates of vaccination against COVID-19, despite prior promises to redistribute supplies no longer needed** by the UK. The data was obtained by a Freedom of Information request, which showed 604,400 vaccines expired in August before being disposed of at the end of the month.

This came after the decision to stop offering the jab to younger age groups in the UK, due to concerns about instances of blood clotting.

The Labour Party have said that it was “staggering that such a colossal quantity of life-saving jabs were allowed to go to waste.”

**Oxfam health policy manager, Anna Marriott, said: “Our estimates suggest at least 100 million vaccine doses could go unused and expire in G7 countries by the end of this year.”**

All this means that the UK is set to break its promise on international vaccination donations, and a cross-party group of MPs and peers has warned that the government may only deliver half of its pledge of 100 million by June 2022.

Only two percent of people are fully vaccinated in lower-income countries, and only ten percent in lower-middle-

income countries, compared with more than half in high-income countries.

The boosters have been administered to the over 50s, front-line medical staff and people with high-risk health conditions, but the UK recently extended its vaccination booster programme to over 40s, to increase protection and help limit the spread of COVID-19 in preparation for the winter period. So far, 12.6 million people have received a booster dose.



The UK disposed of over 600,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine after the jabs were allowed to pass their expiry date, according to a report by The Independent.

Nov. 16, 2021

## Pfizer agrees to let other companies make its COVID-19 pill

... Pfizer said it would **grant a license** for the antiviral pill to the Geneva-based Medicines Patent Pool, **which would let generic drug companies produce the pill for use in 95 countries, making up about 53% of the world's population.**

The deal excludes some large countries that have suffered devastating coronavirus outbreaks. For example, while a Brazilian drug company could get a license to make the pill for export to other countries, the medicine could not be made generically for use in Brazil.

Still, health officials said the fact that the deal was struck even before Pfizer's pill has been authorized anywhere, could help to end the pandemic quicker.

...

Under the terms of the agreement, **Pfizer will not receive royalties on sales in low-income countries and will waive royalties on sales in all countries covered by the agreement while COVID-19 remains a public health emergency.**

Earlier this month, **Pfizer said its pill cut the risk of hospitalization and death by nearly 90% in people with mild to moderate coronavirus** infections. Independent experts recommended halting the company's study based on its promising results.

Pfizer said it would ask the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and other regulators to authorize the pill as soon as possible.

Since the pandemic erupted last year, researchers worldwide have raced to develop a pill to treat COVID-19 that can be taken at home easily to ease symptoms, speed recovery and keep people out of the hospital. At the moment, most COVID-19 treatments must be delivered intravenously or by injection.

**Britain authorized Merck's COVID-19 pill earlier this month**, and it is pending approval elsewhere. **In a similar deal** with the Medicines

Patent Pool announced in October, **Merck agreed to let other drugmakers make its COVID-19 pill, molnupiravir, available in 105 poorer countries.**

Doctors Without Borders said it was "disheartened" that the Pfizer deal does not make the drug available to the entire world, noting that the agreement announced Tuesday also excludes countries including China, Argentina and Thailand.

"The world knows by now that access to COVID-19 medical tools needs to be guaranteed for everyone, everywhere, if we really want to control this pandemic," said Yuanqiong Hu, a senior legal policy adviser at Doctors Without Borders.

The decisions by Pfizer and Merck to share their COVID-19 drug patents stands in stark contrast to the refusal of Pfizer and other vaccine-makers to release their vaccine recipes for wider production. A hub set up by the World Health Organization in South Africa intended to share messenger RNA vaccine recipes and technologies has not enticed a single pharmaceutical to join.

Fewer than 1% of Pfizer's COVID-19 shots have gone to poorer countries.

Robbie Silverman of Oxfam America welcomed Pfizer's agreement to let other makers produce its COVID antiviral, but he noted that billions would still be left without access, including to the company's vaccine.

"This move also begs the important question: If Pfizer can share data and intellectual property on a medicine, why have they so far categorically refused to do so for their COVID vaccine?" Silverman said.

Nov. 17, 2021

## Czech Republic, Slovakia see record cases, mull restrictions

PRAGUE (AP) — PRAGUE — The Czech Republic and Slovakia reported record daily numbers of new coronavirus cases Wednesday, a day before the governments of the neighboring European countries plan to approve new restrictions in response to rising infections.

**The Czech daily tally soared to 22,479 new cases, eclipsing the previous record set Jan. 7 by almost 5,000 and nearly 8,000 more than a week ago.**

The country's infection rate rose to 813 new cases per 100,000 residents over the past seven days, up from 558 a week earlier.

Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis said **the government is considering several options, including following neighboring Austria in ordering a lockdown for unvaccinated residents. Another measure under review is no longer allowing people to attend public events or go to bars and restaurants based on coronavirus test results.**

**Slovakia reported 8,342 new virus cases, surpassing the previous record of 7,244 set Friday. The Slovakian government is planning new restrictions on unvaccinated people** as the country's hospitals are getting overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients.

Slovakian Prime Minister Eduard Heger said his Cabinet would vote Thursday on recommendations from an advisory

group of medical experts. Among the proposals, which would be instituted for three weeks, are banning unvaccinated individuals from non-essential stores, shopping malls, gyms, pools, hotels and mass public gatherings.

Slovakia's Health Ministry said that 81% of the country's 2,879 hospitalized COVID-19 patients have not received coronavirus vaccines.

**The Czech Republic and Slovakia have vaccination rates below the average of the 27 European Union nations.**

Nov. 18, 2021

## The Delta variant was detected on 99.7% of sequenced tests worldwide in the past 60 days

The Delta variant was detected on 99.7% of nearly 800,000 diagnostic tests sequenced and uploaded to a central database in the past 60 days, the World Health Organization said in a report Tuesday.

Delta, which is highly infectious and can avoid the immune response, was **first identified in India in October 2020 and has now spread to 166 countries**, WHO said in the report.

Delta's spread has been "more gradual" in a few countries in South America, according to the report. The Gamma, Lambda, and Mu variants make up a "large proportion" of the country's sequenced tests, the report said. Worldwide, each of those three variants accounted for less than 0.1% of sequenced tests in the past 60 days, the report found.

But not every country has access to sequencing facilities, WHO cautioned, and **delays in uploading test results to GISAID, the central database, may mean some variants are undercounted.**

**Delta, which is a mutated version of the original coronavirus, has 152 descendants**, according to Outbreak.info, which is run by Scripps and uses GISAID data. **One descendent, AY.4.2, is being most closely monitored by public health bodies globally, particularly in the UK, where it has been detected most often.**

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist at WHO, said on Twitter Wednesday that **AY4.2 "may have some transmission advantage and needs watching."**

But it's not yet clear if AY.4.2 is inherently more infectious, or if other factors in England are contributing to its spread. The variant accounted for about 11% of Delta cases in England as of October 23 and about 15% of cases as of November 6, according to the most recent Public Health England report released Friday.

So far, **AY.4.2 doesn't appear more deadly than Delta, and vaccines should protect against it**, the PHE report found.



A man receives a COVID-19 nasal swab test at Tom Bradley International Terminal at Los Angeles International Airport. Mario Tama/Getty Images

Nov. 19, 2021

## Scientists mystified, wary, as Africa avoids COVID disaster

... infections have been dropping since July.

When the coronavirus first emerged last year, health officials feared the pandemic would sweep across Africa, killing millions. Although it's still unclear what COVID-19's ultimate toll will be, that catastrophic scenario has yet to materialize in Zimbabwe or much of the continent.

Scientists emphasize that obtaining accurate COVID-19 data, particularly in African countries with patchy surveillance, is extremely difficult, and warn that declining coronavirus trends could easily be reversed.

But there is something “mysterious” going on in Africa that is puzzling scientists, said Wafaa El-Sadr, chair of global health at Columbia University. “Africa doesn't have the vaccines and the resources to fight COVID-19 that they have in Europe and the U.S., but somehow they seem to be doing better,” she said.

**Fewer than 6% of people in Africa are vaccinated.** For months, the WHO has described Africa as “one of the least affected regions in the world” in its weekly pandemic reports.

**Some researchers say the continent's younger population -- the average age is 20 versus about 43 in Western Europe -- in addition to their lower rates of urbanization and tendency to spend time outdoors, may have spared it the more lethal effects of the virus so far. Several studies are probing whether there might be other explanations, including genetic reasons or exposure to other diseases.**

...

In past months, the coronavirus has pummeled South Africa and is estimated to have killed more than 89,000 people there, by far the

most deaths on the continent. But for now, African **authorities, while acknowledging that there could be gaps, are not reporting huge numbers of unexpected fatalities that might be COVID-related.** WHO data show that **deaths in Africa make up just 3% of the global total. In comparison, deaths in the Americas and Europe account for 46% and 29%.**

In Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, the government has recorded nearly 3,000 deaths so far among its 200 million population. The U.S. records that many deaths every two or three days.

...

The impact of the coronavirus has also been relatively muted in poor countries like Afghanistan, where experts predicted outbreaks amid ongoing conflict would prove disastrous.

Hashmat Arifi, a 23-year-old student in Kabul, said he hadn't seen anyone wearing a mask in months, including at a recent wedding he attended alongside hundreds of guests. In his university classes, more than 20 students routinely sit unmasked in close quarters.

“I haven't seen any cases of corona lately,” Arifi said. So far, Afghanistan has recorded about 7,200 deaths among its 39 million people, although little testing was done amid the conflict and the actual numbers of cases and deaths are unknown.

Back in Zimbabwe, doctors were grateful for the respite from COVID-19 — but feared it was only temporary.

“People should remain very vigilant,” warned Dr. Johannes Marisa, president of the Medical and Dental Private Practitioners of Zimbabwe Association. He fears that another coronavirus ...

Nov. 20, 2021

## CDC expands eligibility for Covid-19 booster shots to all adults

... The new recommendations state that **people between the ages of 18 and 49 who have no risk factors may get a booster if they wish. All other people should get a booster.** From now on health personnel administering booster doses will need to ask two simple questions of people who received one of the mRNA vaccines as their primary Covid series: Are you 18 or older? and Has it been six months or longer since you received your second shot?

The ACIP meeting started just hours after the FDA broadened the eligibility criteria spelled out in the emergency use authorizations for the Pfizer and Moderna boosters. The meeting was called on such short notice — it was announced Tuesday — that only 13 of the committee’s members were able to attend. When the meeting went longer than scheduled, two members had to leave without voting.

Friday’s proceeding brings to full fruition the Biden administration’s goal of offering all vaccinated adults booster shots. **The policy, announced in mid-August, initially drew ire from some in the scientific community. Not everyone believed the evidence supported a need to boost all people who had been vaccinated, especially at a time when many low-income countries have yet to secure first doses for most of their citizens.** Also, the decisions on boosters before the FDA, the CDC, and their respective advisory committees raised questions about the administration’s commitment to “follow the science.”

...

[Prior] recommendations have been difficult to operationalize, ACIP members were told on Friday. The CDC presented polling data that showed that significant portions of the population didn’t know if they were eligible for a booster or not. Some ACIP members noted that the long list of health conditions that made people under the age of 65 eligible for a booster was not something doctors would know off the top of their heads. The guidelines, “though well intentioned and thoughtful, generate an obstacle to uptake of boosters,” Nirav Shah, president of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, told the committee as he made a plea for simpler booster guidance.

**States “are strongly in support of expanding, clarifying and simplifying the eligibility guidance in the manner that’s been discussed and proposed,”** said Shah, who is director of Maine’s Center for Disease Control and Prevention and a non-voting representative to the ACIP. **“There was not a single state that voiced opposition to this move.”**

**Nov. 21, 2021**

## **Ukraine's doctors pushed to the limit by COVID-19 wave**

...While vaccination rates in Eastern Europe have generally lagged, **Ukraine has one of the lowest in the region.** But because of its **underfunded and struggling health care system, the situation has turned dire** nearly two years since the virus swept into Europe.

The country is **setting records almost every day for infections and deaths**, most recently on Tuesday, when 838 deaths were reported.

...

"There are no free beds in the country anymore — a new patient immediately comes to the bed of a discharged person," Tymoshenko added.

**Four coronavirus vaccines are available in Ukraine — Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Sinovac — but only 21% of its 41 million people are fully vaccinated.** The Ministry of Health reported that 96% of patients with severe COVID-19 weren't vaccinated.

Zelenskyy has promised every fully vaccinated Ukrainian a payment of 1,000 hryvnia (\$38), about 5% of the average monthly wage, but widespread hesitancy persists.

Doctors say the vaccines are highly effective at preventing deaths and hospitalizations, and when infections in vaccinated people do occur, they usually are mild.

Oleksandr Kymanov, who refused to get vaccinated, ended up getting infected and was brought to the tent hospital in

Kakhovka from the town of Rozdolne, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) away. Connected to supplemental oxygen, he cited various falsehoods about the vaccine, saying it was "useless" and that "people still get infected and get sick."

**Doctors complain that vaccine falsehoods about containing microchips or that they cause infertility and disease is driving the COVID-19 surge.**

"People believe in the most absurd rumors about chips, infertility and the dangers of vaccines, elderly people from risk groups massively refuse to be vaccinated, and this is very harmful and increases the burden on doctors," Molchanov said. "People trust their neighbors more than doctors."

**The government has required teachers, doctors, government employees and other groups of workers to be fully vaccinated by Dec. 1. It also has also begun to require proof of vaccination or negative COVID-19 test results for travel on planes, trains and long-distance buses.**

**The regulations have spawned a black market for fake vaccination documents, which sell for the equivalent of \$100-\$300. A phony government digital app for smartphones is reportedly available, complete with fake certificates installed.**

"COVID cannot be fooled with a fake certificate, but ...

Nov. 22, 2021

## Austria begins national lockdown to fight surging infections

...The measures are expected to last for a maximum of 20 days but will be reevaluated after 10. They **require people to stay home apart from basic reasons like getting groceries, going to the doctor and exercising. Restaurants and most shops must close and larger events will be canceled. Schools and day care centers can remain open, but parents are encouraged to keep their children home.**

Austria hopes to lift the measures on Dec. 13 but may keep a further lockdown on the unvaccinated.

The new lockdown measures kicked in a day after many Austrians hurriedly enjoyed a last day out at coffeehouses and Christmas markets across the country.

...

Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg also announced Friday that **Austria will also introduce a vaccine mandate as of Feb. 1.** The details of how the mandate will work aren't yet clear.

In an interview Sunday in the Kurier newspaper, Schallenberg said it's "sad" that the Austrian government had to resort to a mandate in order to ensure that enough people get vaccinated. **Just under 66% of Austria's 8.9 million people are fully vaccinated, one of the lowest rates in Western Europe.**

On Saturday, Austria reported 15,297 new infections, after a week in which daily cases topped 10,000. **Hospitals, especially those in the hardest hit regions of Salzburg and Upper Austria, are overwhelmed as the number of coronavirus patients rises in intensive care units.**

Schallenberg said he and other officials had hoped this summer

that a new lockdown would not be necessary and it was a tough decision to impose one that affected vaccinated people.

"That people's freedoms need to be restricted again is, believe me, also difficult for me to bear," he said.

The new measures, especially the vaccine mandate, have been met with fierce opposition among some Austrians and vaccine skeptics. A Saturday protest in the capital of Vienna drew 40,000 people, according to police, including members of far-right parties and groups.

Interior Minister Karl Nehammer said Sunday that the country's anti-coronavirus protest scene is radicalizing.

An "extremely diverse group of people" took part in the anti-vaccination protests, Nehammer said, according to the Austrian Press Agency, adding that included concerned citizens but also right-wing extremists and neo-Nazis.

**The lockdown is strictest measure Austrian officials have introduced to combat a fourth surge of infections and deaths. Earlier this month, the government first tried to pressure unvaccinated people to get the jab, barring them from restaurants, hotels and large events. Then officials implemented lockdown measures just for unvaccinated people.**

Nehammer said Sunday that police performed 150,000 checks in just one week to see if people outside of their homes were complying with the new rules, according to APA...

**Nov. 23, 2021**

## **WHO Europe warns of possible surge in COVID deaths ahead**

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization’s Europe office says projections show its **53-country region could face another 700,000 deaths in the coronavirus pandemic by next spring, topping 2 million in total.**

WHO Europe, which is based in Copenhagen, Denmark, also cited growing evidence of a decline in protection against infection and mild disease through vaccines, and said a **“booster dose” should be given as a priority to the most vulnerable populations — including people with weakened immune systems — as well as people over age 60 and health care workers.**

The U.N. health agency’s international headquarters in Geneva, however, has repeatedly called for a moratorium on the use of boosters through year-end so that doses can be made available for many developing countries that have faced a severe lack of the COVID-19 vaccines compared to the rich world.

WHO Europe called on people to get vaccinated and respect proper hygiene and practice social distancing to help stop the spread of the virus.

“Today, the COVID-19 situation across Europe and Central Asia is very serious. We face a challenging winter ahead, but we should not be without hope, because all of us — governments, health authorities, individuals — can take decisive action to stabilize the pandemic,” said Dr. Kluge, the regional director for WHO Europe, in a statement.

The European region, which stretches deep into central Asia, reported that **deaths due to COVID-19 rose to nearly 4,200 per day last week — a doubling of levels recorded at the end of September.** Cumulative deaths have now reached 1.5 million in the region.

**The three factors driving the increase are the highly transmissible delta variant of the virus, an easing of restrictive measures like requirements for mask-wearing and physical distancing in places, and large swaths of the European population that remain unvaccinated, WHO Europe said.**

“We can expect that there will be high or extreme stress on hospital beds in 25 countries, and high or extreme stress in intensive care units (ICUs) in 49 out of 53 countries between now and 1 March 2022,” a WHO Europe statement said. **“Cumulative reported deaths are projected to reach over 2.2 million by spring next year, based on current trends.”**

It said the region could face a cumulative 2 million deaths due to the pandemic by March 1.

Nov. 24, 2021

## Covid rebound in U.S. is as bad as last November's in some spots

The latest U.S. Covid-19 wave is taking its toll on some states' intensive-care units, with several parts of the country seeing outbreaks that are as bad as ever.

**In 15 states, patients with confirmed or suspected Covid are taking up more ICU beds than a year earlier**, according to Department of Health and Human Services data. **Colorado, Minnesota and Michigan have 41%, 37% and 34% of ICU beds occupied by Covid-19 patients, respectively**, the data show.

The dramatic uptick means there's proportionately less space in hospitals for those suffering from other potentially deadly ailments.

...

The numbers are a sobering reminder of how brutal the pandemic remains for the U.S. health-care system, and **could augur trouble ahead for Northeast states, where cases began surging a few weeks after the Midwest and Rocky Mountains.**

...

### Death Toll

**The U.S. has been reporting more than 1,000 average deaths from Covid every day for more than three months. Increases in fatalities typically follow increases in infections.**

In the meantime, it's not clear to what extent any hospital system is safe. **Many of the states getting hit now have average vaccination rates -- neither spectacularly high like parts of the Northeast nor especially low like parts of the South. Michigan's 54% full vaccination rate trails the national average of 59%, but Colorado and Minnesota are both doing slightly better than the country as a whole.**

In New York, rural areas are seeing positive-test rates of more than 8%, while New York City remains below 2%. State officials have reopened 13 mass vaccination sites and have 200 pop-up sites all over the state to get the vaccines into communities.

"We are heading into a very vulnerable time," New York Governor Kathy

Hochul said on Monday at a turkey distribution event. **"The good news compared from last year to this year, is that we now have the weapons to fight back."**

The vaccines continue to work very well at protecting those who take them, but the societal impact is another matter. Unvaccinated people continue to show a vastly higher rate of hospitalization with Covid-19, according to the latest data from the CDC's Covid-Net surveillance network, which was updated Friday and now includes figures through the end of September.

...

**Maine, which has one of the highest vaccination rates in the U.S., is setting pandemic hospitalization records** with the count of patients nearing 300 in recent days. **The surge is strongest among counties with the lowest vaccination rates**, according to CDC data.

**Idaho** on Monday ended hospital-care rationing rules -- with the exception of its northern panhandle where anti-vaccine sentiment runs high -- but the **system remains stressed**. At St. Luke's Health System, one of Idaho's largest providers, **21% of hospitalized adults are Covid-19 patients while 41% of ICU patients** are being treated for the virus, according to Jim Souza, chief physician executive. Fortunately, there have been no "deallocation decisions" where care was withheld, Souza said during an online briefing.

In **New Hampshire**, where the **staffing crisis is dire and cases are reaching new peaks**, the capacity crunch reached the point that Wentworth-Douglass Hospital in Dover posted a plea on Facebook asking patients to come to the emergency department only for truly acute health crises.

**Hospitalizations in New Jersey, meanwhile, have jumped by 15% in the past week, with those in ICUs up 24%**, Governor Phil Murphy said Monday at a virus briefing.

"These numbers are being driven overwhelmingly by unvaccinated individuals," Murphy said.