

May 3, 2021

Summary

The United States has 32,422,234 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 577,046 reported related deaths. On Friday, the Biden administration launched a website and text line to help people find COVID-19 vaccines where they live. A national 1-800 hotline will also be announced soon, according to a senior official from Department of Health and Human Services. In a press briefing the same day, the White House emphasized the importance of getting the second dose of two-shot vaccines, amidst reports that 8% of people who received their first dose failed to show up to receive their second dose. Also last Friday, Transportation Security Administration issued updated guidance extending the federal mask mandate on commercial flights and other public transportation — originally set to expire May 11 — to remain in effect through September 13.

New CDC data shows that Americans 65 and older who received both doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines were 94% less likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19, the first real-world findings confirming clinical data showing that the mRNA vaccines prevent severe COVID-19 illness. The percentage of Americans who view the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as safe is 46%, compared to more than 70% who feel the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are safe. Of those not vaccinated, 73% say they would not accept the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. 182,874 doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been gone unused in the United States. Retailers Walgreens and CVS account for about 71% of the unused product, more than the states, territories, and federal government combined. Rite Aid has become the latest retailer to expand vaccine eligibility to anyone 16 and older.

Over the past two weeks, the United States has experienced a 27% decrease in positive COVID cases and a 7% decrease in hospitalizations. In recent days, the pace of vaccination has slowed, with 32% of citizens fully vaccinated. New Hampshire is the first state to administer at least one dose of the vaccines to over 60% of its residents.

As of May 2, New York reported 37 deaths, 2,539 hospitalizations, and 613 COVID-19 patients in intensive care. Approximately 2,200, or 1.94%, of the 113,139 tests administered in New York were positive for COVID-19. New York has administered 15,734,364 doses of the vaccines to patients; 46.6% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 35.2% are fully vaccinated. On April 30, Governor Cuomo announced that he would rescind the Executive Order establishing the micro-cluster zone strategy in light of New York State's continuing decrease in positivity rate. On April 30 and May 1, New York State will run a pop-up vaccination site in Buffalo, targeting 16 to 25-year-olds. The site will operate from 9am to 3pm and administer 1,000 doses to eligible residents.

U.S. Government Updates

- [*Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and Public Health Officials*](#), April 30
 - In a press briefing last Friday, the White House emphasized the importance of getting the second dose of two-shot vaccines, amidst reports that 8% of people who received their first dose failed to show up to receive their second dose.
 - The White House also announced that, as of last Thursday, 100 million Americans have been fully vaccinated.
- [*TSA Extends Mask Mandate Aboard Flights Through Summer As Travel Increases*](#), May 1
 - Wearing a face mask will continue to be required at airports, aboard commercial flights, and on other public transportation across the country through the summer.
 - The federal mask mandate, which was set to expire on May 11, will remain in effect through September 13, according to updated [guidance](#) issued by Transportation Security Administration on Friday.
 - The rule also applies to buses and rail systems.
- [*Need A COVID-19 Vaccine? Biden Admin Launches GETVAX Textline And Other Search Tools*](#), April 30
 - On Friday, the Biden administration launched a website and text line to help people find COVID-19 vaccines where they live.
 - A national 1-800 hotline in dozens of languages will also soon be announced, according to a senior official from Department of Health and Human Services.

Vaccines and Therapeutics

- [*CVS, Walgreens Have Wasted More COVID Vaccine Doses Than Most States Combined*](#), May 3
 - According to government data obtained by Kaiser Health News, CDC recorded 182,874 wasted doses of COVID-19 vaccine as of late March. CVS was responsible for nearly 50% of the unused doses, and Walgreens was responsible for 21%.
 - The data shows that the two companies have wasted more shots than states, U.S. territories, and federal agencies combined.
 - The Pfizer vaccine made up nearly 60% of the tossed doses.
 - It is unclear what caused the waste. Some speculate that it was poor planning early in the vaccine rollout, when the Trump administration leaned heavily on CVS and Walgreens to vaccinate residents and staff members at long-term care facilities. CVS said that “nearly all” of its reported vaccine waste occurred during that effort.
- [*Rite Aid Expands COVID-19 Vaccine Access To All Drugstore Locations*](#), April 30
 - On Friday, Rite Aid announced that it has become the latest retailer in the U.S. to expand COVID-19 vaccine eligibility to anyone age 16 or older at all of its locations. Scheduled appointments are recommended, but the company is also allowing walk-ins.
 - The drugstore chain, which has more than 2,500 stores in 17 states, follows Walgreens, CVS, and Walmart in expanding vaccine access in recent weeks.

- [Trust in Johnson & Johnson's Coronavirus Vaccine Is Low, Yet Overall Intent To Get Inoculated Rises](#), April 26
 - According to an ABC News/Washington Post poll released last week, only 46% of Americans view the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine as very safe or somewhat safe, compared to more than 70% who view the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines as such. 73% of those who are not yet vaccinated said they were unwilling to accept a Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
 - Notably, this poll was conducted before the vaccine was returned to use on April 23.
 - 24% of respondents said they definitely or probably will not get any COVID-19 vaccine (including 16% who said they definitely will not), down from 32% in January.
 - 74% of respondents said they have either already been vaccinated or are likely to become vaccinated (including 56% who said they were already vaccinated and 18% who said they definitely or probably will become vaccinated). This is a 9-point increase from the 65% who said the same in January.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review](#), April 30
 - CDC summarized key COVID-19 disease indicators for last week.
 - As of April 28, the seven-day average number of daily new cases reported was 52,528. This is a 16.2% decrease compared to the previous week's average, and an overall 79% decrease compared to the national peak on January 8, 2021.
 - As of April 29, the seven-day average number of reported vaccine dose administrations was 2.6 million, a 10.7% decrease compared to the previous week.
 - As of April 27, the average number of new daily hospital admissions was 5,057, a 9.8% decrease compared to the previous week's average.
 - As of April 28, the seven-day average of reported deaths was 628 per day, an 8.2% decrease compared to the previous week's average.
- [U.S. Administers 245.6 Million Doses of COVID-19 Vaccines](#), May 3
 - According to CDC, the United States has [administered](#) 245,591,469 doses of COVID-19 vaccines as of Sunday, May 2. The agency said 147,047,012 people had received at least one dose while 104,774,652 people were fully vaccinated.
 - CDC has also [estimated](#) the total number of infections in the U.S. from February 2020 to March 2021 using a statistical model to adjust for cases that national surveillance networks are [unable](#) to capture. During that period, CDC estimates 114.6 million infections occurred, including 97.1 million symptomatic infections and 5.6 million hospitalizations.
- [Fully Vaccinated Adults 65 and Older Are 94% Less Likely to Be Hospitalized with COVID-19](#), April 28
 - According to a new CDC assessment of people who received the Pfizer or Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, fully vaccinated people 65 and older were 94% less likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 than people of the same age who were not vaccinated. People 65 and older who were partially vaccinated (two weeks after receiving one dose) were 64% less likely to be hospitalized.

- CDC says that these are the first real-world findings in the U.S. confirming clinical data showing that mRNA vaccines prevent severe COVID-19 illness.

New York State

- [New York State COVID-19 Updates](#), May 3
 - New York reported 37 deaths, 2,539 hospitalizations, and 613 COVID-19 patients in intensive care on May 2, 2021.
 - Approximately 2,200, or 1.94%, of the 113,139 tests administered in New York on May 2 were positive for COVID-19.
 - As of May 2, New York has administered 15,734,364 doses of the vaccines to patients; 46.6% of New York residents have received at least one dose of the vaccines; and 35.2% are fully vaccinated.
 - On April 30, Governor Cuomo announced that he would [rescind](#) the Executive Order establishing the micro-cluster zone strategy in light of New York State’s continuing decrease in positivity rate. The micro-cluster zone strategy was a set of restrictions divided into three color-coded zones—red, orange, and yellow— each with different rules for gatherings, schools, and businesses by specific neighborhoods or boroughs in New York City. Cuomo lifted zones in the rest of the State earlier this year.
 - On April 30 and May 1, New York State will [run](#) a pop-up vaccination site in Buffalo, targeting 16 to 25-year-olds. The site will operate from 9am to 3pm and administer 1,000 doses to eligible residents. Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority will provide 1,000 day passes to help eligible residents travel to the pop-up site. In making this announcement, Governor Cuomo stated: “With Western New York continuing to have the State’s highest positivity rate, we are stepping in to remind the region, and particularly its young people, how important the COVID-19 vaccination is, while making it easier than ever to access.”
 - On April 28, Governor Cuomo [announced](#) that New York State distributed \$6.7 million in relief aid to the State’s seafood, commercial marine, and for-hire fishing industries after excessive losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the coming months, New York State will distribute an additional \$5.7 million, for a total of \$12.4 million, through the Marine Fisheries Relief Program, which administers federal coronavirus relief funding in the commercial fishing industry.

New York City

- [New York City COVID-19 Updates](#), May 3
 - Beginning May 7, New York City indoor dining will [expand](#) to 75% capacity, in line with the rest of New York State. On the same day, hair salons, barbershops, and other personal care services will also expand to 75% capacity.
 - Beginning May 15, New York City gyms and fitness centers will [expand](#) to 50% capacity.
 - Beginning May 17, the New York City subway will resume 24-hour service. Metropolitan Transportation Authority will continue its unprecedented disinfection and cleaning efforts.

International

- In [India](#) on Sunday, the New Delhi High Court said that it would start punishing government officials for failing to deliver oxygen after hospitals in the capital successfully sought a court order for its delivery. The same day, the Indian Supreme Court urged the central and state governments to consider another lockdown to gain control of the virus and to create an emergency stockpile of oxygen. The statements come amidst a severe coronavirus outbreak in India. On Sunday, Adar Poonawalla, the chief executive of India's Serum Institute, stated that India's vaccine [shortage](#) would probably last for months after a delay in planning for a second wave of infections.
- Last Thursday, [Brazil](#) surpassed 400,000 COVID-19 deaths, capping off the country's deadliest month of the pandemic yet. More Brazilians have died from the virus in the first four months of 2021 than in all of 2020, with the death toll having increased by 100,000 deaths in the past five weeks alone.
- In the [Mexican](#) capital of Mexico City, officials have sought to improve customer service at vaccination centers with entertainment performances for those waiting for their shots.
- On Saturday, [Nepal](#) halted all domestic flights and announced that it would suspend international flights starting Wednesday due to a surge in coronavirus infections.

Other Updates

- [*Flush with Cash, Americans Are Buying Everything from iPhones to Teslas*](#), April 30
 - On Friday, United States Department of Commerce reported that personal income jumped 21.1% in March as the government sent out \$1,400 relief payments as part of its recent \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief effort. Personal spending also jumped by 4.2%.
 - Spending is also increasing by wealthier Americans, even as many continue to put money toward savings.

Other recent events covered in detail elsewhere:

- [American Rescue Plan Act \(ARPA\) Phase 5 Stimulus Package – Highlights of Certain Key Tax-Related Provisions in ARPA](#), March 26
- [American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 – Summary of Key Provisions](#), March 25
- [Key Employee Benefit Provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#), March 19

Send questions to:

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