



COVID-19 UPDATE July 27, 2020

Global

Total cases – 16,350,348

Total deaths – 650,553

United States

Total cases – 4,275,346

Total deaths – 147,285

Total # tests – 51,491,494

Administration

- **White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow** said he expects to see U.S. economic growth jump by 20% in both the third and fourth quarters. The Trump administration also expects Congress to pass an extension of the federal eviction moratorium, which expired Friday and covers renters in building with federally backed mortgages. “We will lengthen” the moratorium, Kudlow said on CNN’s “State of the Union.”
- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** said 35% of Americans with mild Covid-19 infections haven’t recovered two to three weeks after a positive test. The agency surveyed 292 non-hospitalized adults in 13 states from April to June, and 26% of those aged 18 to 34 years didn’t return to their usual health after a two to three week period.
- The **HHS** is seeking the production of Covid-19 bedside antibody tests whose components are “entirely made in the United States,” according to the General Services Administration website. The [request for information](#) by the Department of Health and Human Services’ Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response seeks device makers that can provide at least 20 million point-of-care units per month.
- **President Trump** says his administration has secured 90% of the remdesivir supply.
- **U.S. health officials** issued guidelines for reopening schools as districts across the country weigh whether to bring kids back amid the coronavirus pandemic, a move that follows calls by President Donald Trump for classrooms to resume in-person instruction this fall.
 - The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** laid out an argument on Thursday for bringing students back to campuses, citing the developmental harm that could be caused to children from missed education.
 - The CDC said in a statement titled “The Importance of Reopening America’s Schools This Fall” that while parents, teachers and school officials are concerned about the risk of transmitting the coronavirus in classrooms, the “best available evidence indicates if

children become infected, they are far less likely to suffer severe symptoms.” The CDC also said death rates from the virus among children are much lower than among adults.

- **President Donald Trump** said he’s [canceling](#) the Republican convention scheduled for next month in Jacksonville, Florida, as the coronavirus outbreak continues to grow.
 - “I told my team it’s time to cancel the Jacksonville, Florida component of the GOP convention,” Trump said at the White House.
 - The decision comes as Trump’s voter support is plunging over his response to the pandemic. Florida posted 173 new deaths from the virus on Thursday, pushing the total to 5,518. Trump said some convention business would still take place in Charlotte, North Carolina.
- **President Trump** says he’s asking Congress to provide \$105 billion for schools to support mitigation measures such as smaller class sizes, more teachers and teacher aides.
 - Trump, at White House coronavirus briefing, says CDC will provide additional guidance on how schools can reopen safely
 - “If schools do not reopen the funding should go to parents,” Trump says, adding U.S. cannot “indefinitely stop” students from going to school
 - “Schools have to open safely, they have to open”
- **Justice Dept** won’t challenge proposed efforts to share information that could expedite production of antibody treatments to treat Covid-19, according to [agency statement](#).
 - Efforts to share information have been proposed by Eli Lilly and Company, AbCellera Biologics, Amgen, AstraZeneca, Genentech, GlaxoSmithKline
- **President Trump's national security adviser, Robert O'Brien**, has tested positive for coronavirus, according to another official familiar with what happened.
 - O'Brien, one of Trump's top aides, recently returned from Europe where he and his top deputy met with officials from the U.K., France, Germany and Italy.
- There is not a uniform threshold when it comes to reopening schools, **Health and Human Service Secretary Alex Azar** said on Sunday.
 - “We don’t believe that there are uniform thresholds for school reopenings,” he said on CBS Sunday, when asked why there wasn’t a benchmark on when schools should shut down..
 - The 5% threshold that is laid out by the administration that defines a hotspot refers to positive testing, he said.
 - Azar described communities with 5% positive testing as yellow communities and 10% positive testing as red communities.
 - “That’s an epidemiological early warning sign of potential spread of disease,” he said. “That’s not been defined as a threshold for reopening of any kind.”
- **Admiral Brett Giroir**, a member of the White House’s coronavirus task force, said on Sunday that the US has enough tests to complete testing goals, if they are used in the right way.
 - “We want to improve our testing, but we have enough tests right now, if we use them in the right way, to achieve the goals that we need to achieve,” Giroir told CNN.
 - “What is true now, is that anyone who needs a test can get a test,” he said. “I feel like going somewhere, so I need a test, that is not where we are.”
 - Giroir said that we are in the middle of a serious pandemic, which we are trying to, and starting to control, in hotspot states. Data shows that the percent positivity is being flattened or decreased and hospitalizations are going down, he said.

- The federal government has sent money to states to support their contact tracing plans, Admiral Brett Giroir told CNN Sunday.
- “They have plenty enough money to do that, as of last week, of the \$10.25 billion, there’s only been \$50 million drawn from that,” he said.
- Giroir also said that he does not think that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention needs to improve its guidelines on contact tracing, but that wearing masks is more important than contact tracing.
- **White House officials and Senate Republicans** are finalizing a bill that would offer \$1,200 checks to many Americans and that would not renew the full unemployment insurance enhancement that is set to expire officially this week as part of the proposal for the next stimulus bill set to be unveiled Monday, several top administration officials said Sunday.
 - “We want to move forward quickly, the bill will be introduced Monday, we are prepared to act quickly,” Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said on “Fox News Sunday.”
 - **White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow** told CNN that \$1,200 checks to Americans will be part of the new recovery package, in addition to re-employment bonuses, retention bonuses and tax credits for small businesses and restaurants.
 - Kudlow said the Republican proposal will lengthen the federal eviction moratorium that is lapsing just as the additional \$600 a week unemployed Americans have relied upon is also set to expire.
 - “The original benefits will not” be in the new bill, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said on ABC. “The original unemployment benefits actually paid people to stay home.”
 - **Meadows** said the proposal will involve offering enhanced unemployment benefits that would replace a laid-off worker’s wages up to 70%, although he acknowledged challenges some states will face in administering such a complicated benefit. He said he has worked with Mnuchin and Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia to ensure “antiquated computers” in some state benefit offices don’t stop people from receiving their benefits.
- The **US Food and Drug Administration** has authorized the first coronavirus test for asymptomatic Covid-19 cases and for those who don’t think they’re infected with the virus at all.
 - The agency reissued an emergency use authorization for a LabCorp Covid-19 RT-PCR test after the company provided scientific proof that the test was able to detect the virus in asymptomatic individuals. The RT-PCR test amplifies genetic matter from the virus so it’s detectable.
 - The emergency use authorization also allows the test to be used on pooled samples.
- A Covid-19 likely won't be "widely available" to people in the US until "several months" into next year, **Dr. Anthony Fauci**, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said Friday.
 - “I think as we get into 2021, several months in, that you would have [a] vaccine that would be widely available to people in the United States,” Fauci told the Washington Post’s Robert Costa during a Post Live event.
- **Admiral Dr. Brett Giroir**, the assistant secretary for health for the US Department of Health and Human Services, said Thursday that he has been in talks with universities and colleges to help them strategize how they should be testing students when they return to campus this fall.
 - Giroir said that a lot depends on the rates of cases in the community and the specific demographics of the university, but generally, he has been urging universities to do surveillance testing.

- Giroir emphasized this is not diagnostic testing, but surveillance testing that won't burden the health system and could help universities track potential outbreaks and manage them early – before they become a bigger problem.
- He said the labs on campus, even veterinary labs, could run these tests. The labs will not need an emergency use authorization from the US Food and Drug Administration to do this.
- He said these labs can also do pool testing, which will be returned quicker. With pool testing, if a group of tests turns up positive, the lab can then refer those five students into the diagnostic testing system.
- **President Trump** says the **Health and Human Services Dept** has awarded \$265m to Fujifilm and Texas A&M University to work on the development and manufacture of a potential Covid-19 vaccine.
- The federal food box program intended to provide relief to both hungry Americans and struggling farmers will continue purchasing commodities into October, the **Agriculture Department** said. Democrats have criticized the Farmers to Families Food Box Program, created in April as part of the \$19 billion Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, for regional inequities and distribution problems, Megan Boyanton reports.
- **HHS** awards \$121 million contract to AirBoss Defense Group to provide 50k powered air purifying respirators and related accessories to the Strategic National Stockpile, according to company statement
 - Deliveries to HHS are expected to begin in Q3, AirBoss says
 - Powered air purifying respirators provide greater protection from Covid-19 than an N95 mask
 - HHS award follows \$96 million FEMA contract, which AirBoss says has been 90% delivered
- **FCC** employees will be allowed to telework at least through June 2021, agency Chief of Staff Matthew Berry said in a Friday staff-wide email.

Capitol Hill

- **Republican senators** introduce first parts of the GOP's coronavirus pandemic relief plan.
 - Sen. John Cornyn's bill on liability protections [here](#)
 - Sen. Chuck Grassley's bill for assistance payments, unemployment insurance [here](#)
 - Sens. Marco Rubio and Susan Collins' legislation for the small-business relief loan program [here](#)
- **Senate Appropriations Cmte Chairman Richard Shelby** releases [bill](#) on emergency virus relief funding.
 - Package includes \$105b to help schools adapt for children to return to the classroom; \$16b in grants to states for testing, contact tracing, and surveillance; \$20b for vaccine, therapeutic and diagnostic development, according to statement
- **House Speaker Nancy Pelosi** asks Republican leadership and White House representatives to meet with her and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer within 30 minutes of GOP releasing its aid plan.
 - "Time is running out," Pelosi says in [statement](#). "We have stood ready to negotiate for more than two months"
- **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell** says a Republican stimulus proposal will focus on health care, economic assistance, liability protection and schools.

- McConnell says in opening floor comments it is “another historic package for the next phase of this historic national fight”
- Says proposal includes funding for treatments and vaccines, another round of direct payments to American households, and more than \$100 billion to go to schools and universities
- “To make a law, bipartisan talks need to come next,” McConnell says
- **Senate Republicans** propose cutting supplemental unemployment benefits to \$200 weekly from \$600 until states are able to create a system that would provide 70% of a laid-off worker’s previous pay, according to two people familiar with the plan.
 - The plan, which was agreed to by the Trump administration, calls for a two-month transition and then allows states to apply for a waiver for up to two additional months if they can’t implement the new calculation, according to the people, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the plan hasn’t been made public.
- **Senate Republicans** are expected to include stimulus payments for all family dependents in their opening bid for the next round of coronavirus relief aid, an expansion of eligibility from the March stimulus package, according to two people familiar with the matter.
 - Under the proposals, all dependents of filers who qualify for stimulus checks could receive a \$500 rebate
 - Under the anticipated new terms, tax filers with adult dependents, like college students or elderly parents, would also receive a \$500 rebate
 - “Looking to the long-term the COVID-19 crisis has weakened the critical federal trust fund,” Senate Majority Leader [Mitch McConnell](#) says.
- Speaking at a news conference in Ashland, Kentucky, **McConnell** said lawmakers have spent \$3 trillion already in response to the outbreak and subsequent shutdown of the economy and therefore “need to be very careful what we do next” because that spending led to “a national debt the size of our economy for the first time since World War II, so that in itself is concerning.”
 - McConnell said Republicans “envision another round of direct cash payments, especially to those making \$40,000 a year and less” with a focus on “the hospitality industry (which) has been really hit hard.”
 - Finally, McConnell explained the GOP proposal will include liability protections for businesses, schools, and other entities to make sure they are not sued if people get sick as the economy reopens, he has explained before.
 - “The measure will include liability protection, for the coronavirus only, beginning in December 2019 and running for the next four years,” he said. “That will be the beginning of the discussion with the Democrats next week. Hopefully, we can come together behind something we can agree on in the next few weeks.”
 - The plan, which was agreed on with the Trump administration, calls for a two-month transition and then permits states to seek a waiver for two additional months if they can’t implement the new calculation, according to the people.
- **Senate Republicans** crafting their version of the next major coronavirus relief bill are trying to revive **school choice** and student loan proposals that have stalled in Congress. **Sen. [Lamar Alexander](#)** (R-Tenn.), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, said this week that both the student loan overhaul and new funding to help parents send their children to private schools would be part of a GOP stimulus proposal coming as soon as Monday. Inclusion of those proposals, along with a provision tying school aid to campuses reopening, would further complicate a deal with Democrats.

- **Democratic Sens. [Elizabeth Warren](#) (Mass.) and [Cory Booker](#) (N.J.)** said Tyson Foods, JBS USA, Cargill and Smithfield Foods aren't consistently implementing CDC guidelines on 6-foot social distancing at their plants, even as the companies warn of shortages but continue exporting to China. "Their responses - or lack thereof - fail to sufficiently explain why they claimed there were pending domestic shortages only to go on and export record quantities of meat to China, which recent reports indicate they continue to do even as frozen supplies fall," the law makers said
- **Majority Leader [Steny Hoyer](#)** says the House won't go on its August break until the next pandemic relief package is completed.
 - Hoyer, speaking in end-of-week leadership colloquy, says the House will probably be in session the week of Aug. 3 because it's very likely a deal could be reached that week
 - Talks on the package are ongoing, he says
 - House next week will consider child-care bills related to the pandemic and another FY21 spending package; other items are possible
- **Democratic Sen. [Patrick Leahy](#)** says in statement the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has agreed to postpone the furlough of more than 13,000 federal employees through Aug. 31.
 - USCIS announcement came after Leahy found that new revenue estimates showed the agency ending the fiscal year in a surplus: statement
 - The issue will be addressed in the next coronavirus supplemental "so that USCIS can continue accomplishing its missions without a furlough," Leahy says
- The **Senate** passed legislation that would prevent banks and creditors from garnishing stimulus payments when they are directly deposited into recipients accounts. The bill would fix a problem lawmakers identified after the CARES Act that banks could use the payments from their customers to pay past debts.
- **Reps. [Anna Eshoo](#) (D-Calif.) and [Don Young](#) (R-Alaska) and Sens. [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska) and [Schatz](#)** sent a [letter](#) yesterday to FCC Chairman Ajit Pai raising concerns about transparency related to the \$200 million in Covid-19 telehealth program funding provided under the CARES Act.
- **U.S. Representatives [Don Beyer](#) (D-VA), Vice Chair and House leader of Congress' Joint Economic Committee, and [Derek Kilmer](#) (D-WA), Chair of the New Democrat Coalition,** today introduced the Worker Relief and Security Act. The legislation would automatically continue and provide for additional enhanced emergency unemployment benefits for the duration of the public health emergency and ensuing economic crisis until conditions return closer to pre-crisis levels.

State/Local

- The U.S. Supreme Court rejected an effort by a **Nevada** church to ease limits on the size of its services during the coronavirus pandemic.
 - Voting 5-4, the justices rebuffed Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley, a Reno-area church that said the state was illegally discriminating by imposing stricter requirements on church services than on Las Vegas casinos. The state's order limits indoor church services to 50 people, and the church said it wanted to accommodate as many as 90.
- **New Orleans Mayor [LaToya Cantrell](#)** effectively closed the city's bars, prohibiting take-out alcohol service from bars and restaurants starting on Saturday. Indoor bar service had already been prohibited as cases in Louisiana continue to spike.
- **Illinois** on Friday reported that four counties in the state have reached a "warning level" for coronavirus due to "outbreaks associated with business and risky behavior" such as large

gatherings and traveling to hot spots in other states, according to an emailed statement. The counties include Adams, LaSalle, Peoria and Randolph in central and downstate parts of the state.

- **Vermont Governor Phil Scott** signed an order mandating masks “in public spaces, both indoor and outdoor, where physical distancing is not possible,” he said on Twitter. He said that Vermont, which has not had a virus fatality in over a month, needs “to protect our hard-won gains” against the surge of cases in the South and West.
- **Florida Governor Ron DeSantis** said there was no need to impose new restrictions despite the record number of virus fatalities reported Thursday.
 - “When the state reports that, that’s not saying those deaths occurred last night,” said DeSantis, a Republican. “Sometimes those can go back months.”
 - He said measures already in place, like local mask requirements and social distancing, were helping contain the outbreak. “We’re not going to restrict businesses,” he said.
- **San Diego, California, Mayor Kevin Faulconer** signed an executive order to allow local gyms, churches and salons to expand their businesses outdoors into private parking lots.
 - “It’s all about how to keep our economy going but do it safely, and to try to be innovative and creative,” he told CNN. “As we have allowed restaurants to move out into the sidewalk and to the streets, parking lots, the same thing with gyms and other businesses. It’s about a lifeline that can keep folks employed, to keep businesses operating safely and try to do everything we can to obviously work through this pandemic.”
- **New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio** is calling for courts to reopen across the city, the mayor said Monday during his daily Covid-19 news conference.
 - The mayor said coronavirus has allowed for an uptick in crimes and it is time to restart all pieces of the justice system.
- **Coronavirus task force coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx** and **Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear** told reporters on Sunday that the federal and state government agree on measures needed to slow the rate of Covid-19 infections in the state.
 - While Kentucky is currently a yellow zone, it has the potential to slip into the red zone, Birx said.
 - Birx said it appears that the current rise of cases in Kentucky are from residents going on vacation to places like Myrtle Beach and other beach communities and unknowingly bringing back the infection.
- **Halsey Beshears, the head of Florida's business regulation department**, said in a tweet that he is setting up meetings throughout the state with breweries and bars to discuss how to reopen.
- **The Washington Secretary of Health** expanded the requirement for face masks to any indoor public and non-public setting where social distancing cannot be maintained, a press release from the Washington Department of Health said Saturday.
 - This requirement includes congregant settings such as common areas in apartment buildings, condos, fraternity/sorority houses, assisted living facilities and other similar places, the release said.
 - People are not required to wear masks when they are in their dwelling, which would count as their room in a congregant setting such as the ones listed above, according to the release.
 - The previous order required masks only in areas outside of the home.

- **Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves** announced additional statewide restrictions today on social gatherings, bars, restaurants and alcohol sales, citing an increase in Covid-19 cases that are currently stressing the state's hospitals.
 - "We have over 1,600 new cases today. And that number is simply not sustainable. It pushes us towards almost 6,000 new cases in the last four days alone," the governor said at a news conference. "We have to do things a little bit differently. We have to be willing to make sacrifices as a state and as a people."
 - Reeves added six counties to the existing list of 23 counties that must follow stricter measures, including mask mandates.
- Elementary schools in counties on **California's** monitoring list will be able to reopen their campuses for in-person classes with a waiver, **Gov. Gavin Newsom** confirmed at a news conference on Friday.
 - As of Friday, 34 of California's 58 counties are on Newsom's watch list, including Los Angeles and other counties in the Bay Area. This represents more than 90% of the state's population.
 - Newsom warned that more counties may be added this weekend.
- The health department in **Harris County, Texas**, is issuing an order requiring all public and non-religious private schools in the county to remain closed to in-person instruction until at least Sept. 8, County Judge Lina Hidalgo said Friday.
 - She said that date may be too early, and the start of in-person instruction may be delayed further. Officials would need to get the virus under control before they can "responsibly bring our kids back to in-person schooling."
- **Washington, DC, Mayor Muriel Bowser** announced that she is issuing a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine order for people returning from high-risk areas outside of the district.
 - Starting Monday, anyone coming into the district who is not traveling for essential activity will be required to quarantine for 14 days. DC health will publish a list of high-risk locations every two weeks. The order excludes Maryland and Virginia.
 - High-risk areas are considered to be locations where the seven-day moving average of daily new Covid-19 cases is 10 or more per 100,000 people.
 - The order will last until Oct. 9 when the current public health emergency declaration expires. Both can be extended or cut short depending on the need.
 - Bowser said universities in Washington will be required to maintain lists of students who traveled from high-risk areas and these students must self-quarantine on campus or in off-campus housing when they return.
- **Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker** announced an executive order Friday that will go into effect on August 1 and require any travelers to the state to quarantine for 14 days unless they can provide a negative test result for Covid-19.
 - The order will apply to Massachusetts residents returning from out of state as well as other travelers, Baker told reporters.
 - Travelers from states with lower rates of transmission will be exempt, the governor said.
 - As of Friday, that list included the states of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and Hawaii.
- **Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee** said he plans to roll out school reopening plans on Tuesday.
 - "Our kids need to be in school because kids not only academically are suffering, emotionally, mental health, we know kids suffer in mental health capacity, child abuse reporting is way down and we don't believe it's because child abuse is down it's because

schools and teachers are a reporting mechanism for that. There are a number of working families who need for their children to be in school so they can continue to work. There's a lot of reasons why schools can be and should be open. So long as we do that in a way that protects teachers and protects students at the same time we believe we can do," Lee said.

- New temporary restrictions to mitigate the resurgence of Covid-19 in **Indianapolis, Indiana**, were announced today.
 - "Masks are still mandatory – doubly so after the governor's order. Aside from the list of exceptions provided in today's order, masks must be worn over the nose and mouth whenever we are around each other in public – indoors or outdoors," Mayor Joe Hogsett [tweeted](#) Thursday.
 - The mayor announced that social gatherings, including wedding receptions, banquets, and club meetings, won't be allowed to exceed 50 individuals. This doesn't include indoor religious ceremonies, which can be held at up to 50% capacity. Outdoor ceremonies can continue without restriction, Hogsett said.
 - The mayor has also ordered that bars and nightclubs that don't serve food, close until at least August 12, including bar seating at restaurants. While outdoor seating is preferred, restaurants can operate at 50% indoor dining capacity, but have to close for in-person dining between midnight and 5 a.m.
 - Personal services like tattoo parlors, nail and hair salons, and spas can operate by appointment only, while gyms and other fitness centers will be allowed to operate at 25% capacity.

International

- **Norway** will impose a mandatory 10-day quarantine for all travelers returning from Spain, due to a spike in coronavirus cases, Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on Saturday.
 - Norway advises against all non-essential travel for several countries within Europe including Andorra, Bulgaria, Croatia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Spain and some regions of Sweden, the ministry said in a statement. The restrictions will apply until August 20.
- **France** and **Germany** have announced that they will introduce coronavirus testing on arrival for passengers traveling from high-risk countries, including the United States, with a mandatory 14-day quarantine period for those who test positive.
 - Speaking during a visit to Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris on Friday, French Prime Minister Jean Castex confirmed a list of 16 "red" countries whose travelers will be subjected to "systematic" testing upon arrival.
 - According to the prime minister's office, the 16 countries include South Africa, Algeria, Bahrain, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, United States, India, Israel, Kuwait, Madagascar, Oman, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Serbia and Turkey.
- Face coverings are now required for anyone entering shops and supermarkets in **England**, as new rules intended to limit the spread of coronavirus come into force.
 - Guidance [published by the government](#) on Thursday said the rules also apply to banks, post offices, enclosed transport hubs and shopping malls.
 - Customers buying food to take away from cafes and shops must also wear a mask. However, venues such as eat-in pubs, restaurants, gyms and salons, where other precautionary measures are in place, will be exempt.
 - Those who fail to wear a mask could face a fine of up to £100 (\$127).

- A total of 300 new novel coronavirus cases have been detected in the **southeastern Australian state of Victoria**, the state's premier announced Friday.
 - Of the 300 cases, only 51 are from a known source with connections to previous cases.
 - Premier Daniel Andrews told reporters that health authorities had struggled to conduct contact tracing interviews with around 25% of people who had tested positive, as they were unable to contact them.
 - To ensure that contact tracing interviews are conducted on the same day, twenty-eight teams from the Australian Defense Force will be dispatched to go from door-to-door with health officials, Andrews said.
- **Moroccan** authorities imposed lockdowns on the country's biggest cities, including Casablanca, Fez, Tangier and Marrakesh, to counter a "considerable increase" in Covid-19 cases across the country, according to the Health Ministry. Exemptions apply, including for deliveries of essential supplies and urgent medical care.
- **Iraq** plans to impose a 10-day curfew from the end of this month in an effort to prevent the spread of the coronavirus during the Islamic Eid holidays. The curfew will start on July 30 and the government will review the situation at the end of the holidays. Iraq has been reporting coronavirus cases of over 2,000 a day and the country's total number of infections is above 100,000 so far.
- The **European Union** deems potential COVID-19 vaccines through an initiative co-led by the World Health Organization as slow and high-cost, Reuters reports, citing two unidentified EU sources.
 - EU in talks to buy potential COVID-19 vaccines at prices lower than \$40, report says
 - WHO and GAVI, a partnership that co-leads the COVAX initiative, didn't immediately comment; EU commission spokesman declined to comment: Reuters
- In **Hong Kong**, mask wearing will be compulsory in all indoor and outdoor public spaces from Wednesday midnight to August 4, authorities announced on Monday, with failure to comply resulting in a fine up to HKD 5,000 (\$645).
- **São Paulo's Carnival** has been postponed until May or June next year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the city's Mayor Bruno Covas announced during a news conference on Friday.
 - The decision involves both the parade of the samba schools and the street blocks that last year attracted 15 million people during three weeks, according to the mayor.
- **Costa Rica's** government has announced it will allow international travelers from the European Union, Canada and the UK starting on Aug. 1 — but not from the United States yet.
 - Costa Rica's President Carlos Alvarado and Tourism Minister Gustavo Segura said that the decision means a gradual reopening of Juan Santamaría and Daniel Oduber International airports.
 - "This means few tourists will be coming per week but it is a good step in the right direction," Segura explained.
- **The European Union** appears set to keep its external borders shut to travelers from most countries including the U.S. for at least two more weeks due to spikes in Covid-19 cases, according to two officials familiar with the matter. The EU is leaning toward shortening a list of 13 states—Canada, China, Japan, and South Korea among them—whose residents have a green light to visit, the officials said

- **McDonald's Corp.** will require all customers to wear face coverings when entering U.S. restaurants effective August 1 and is extending a pause on reopening more dining rooms for another 30 days, the company said in a statement.
 - Meanwhile, McDonald's has developed divider panels and barrier solutions "to safely allow owner/operators to increase order taking and seating capacity, as well as staffing levels, while continuing to meet social distancing guidelines."
- **Universal Studios** announced it has canceled this year's Halloween Horror Nights at its Orlando and Hollywood theme parks.
- **Chipotle** said in a statement it would begin requiring masks on Friday and had posted signs at entrances "letting customers know."
- **Schlumberger Ltd.** warned that new waves of Covid-19 would derail the nascent recovery in global energy demand. The caution came after the oilfield giant posted its weakest sales in 14 years. Schlumberger is spending \$1 billion to eliminate 21,000 jobs.
 - **Honeywell** is targeting cost savings of as much as \$1.6 billion in 2020 with actions such as permanently cutting the workforce, reducing work schedules, canceling merit-based increases and slashing executive pay.
- **Staples** will require all customers to wear face coverings when entering any of their US stores beginning today.
 - "As an essential retailer, Staples knows our customers have been relying on our products and services to run their businesses and work and learn from home effectively," said CEO Mike Motz [in a statement Friday](#). "Today, we are asking our customers to help protect themselves and those around them so that we can continue to provide these essential products and services."
- **The National Collegiate Athletic Association** will allow schools to reduce their fall sports schedules to half of a typical season. The new waiver would not apply to football.
 - In a [statement](#) issued on Monday, the collegiate governing body revealed the waiver will be made available for men's and women's cross country, men's and women's soccer, field hockey, men's water polo and women's volleyball teams.
 - Those in conferences that have "eliminated" non-conference matchups for the upcoming season can continue to play while avoiding to schedule additional games. The change aims to limit travel and exposure to all parties involved amid the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Disney** has changed reopening plans for some of its hotels on the Walt Disney World property in Lake Buena Vista, Florida.
 - According to the resort website, Disney's Polynesian Village Resort and Disney's Art of Animation will reopen later than originally scheduled. Reopening dates previously announced for Disney's Beach Club Resort and Disney's BoardWalk Inn have been canceled.
- **Google** will extend its work-from-home stance until at least July 2021, according to a person familiar with the matter.
 - The company had previously said most employees will be working remotely through the end of 2020, with some employees being allowed back into the office sooner.
 - But the decision to extend the remote work policy well into next year indicates that one of the world's largest tech companies is bracing for a long pandemic — and could prompt other businesses to follow suit.

- **Target** is rolling out a series of changes for the holiday season to ensure more safe shopping for customers, including closing stores on Thanksgiving day and starting sale pricing earlier in the season.
 - Both changes are designed to reduce a crush of people crowding stores and trying to score deals, according to a [company announcement](#).
- More than **150 prominent medical experts, scientists, teachers, nurses** and other experts have signed a letter [urging leaders to shut the country down](#) and start over to contain the rampant spread of the virus.
 - "The best thing for the nation is not to reopen as quickly as possible, it's to save as many lives as possible," they wrote in the letter, which was sent last week to the Trump administration, leading members of Congress and state governors.
- The first Phase 3 clinical trial of a coronavirus vaccine in the United States began Monday.
 - The investigational vaccine was developed by the biotechnology company Moderna and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the National Institutes of Health. The trial is to be conducted at nearly 100 US research sites, according to Moderna. The first patient was dosed at a site in Savannah, Georgia.
 - The trial is expected to enroll about 30,000 adult volunteers and evaluates the safety of the Moderna/NIH vaccine and whether it can prevent symptomatic Covid-19 after two doses, among other outcomes. Volunteers will receive either two 100 microgram injections of the vaccine or a placebo about 28 days apart. Investigators and participants will not know who has received the vaccine.
- **Emirates**, the United Arab Emirates flag carrier, has become the world's first airline to offer to cover customers' medical expenses and quarantine costs should they contract Covid-19 during their trip.
 - The airline will pay medical expenses up to €150,000 (\$173,000) and quarantine costs of up to €100 for 14 days, should they be diagnosed with coronavirus during their travel, while away from home.
 - The cover will be available to all customers, at no extra cost, from now until October 31, 2020. It's valid for 31 days from the moment they fly the first leg of their trip, so passengers can continue to have the benefit even if they travel onwards from their Emirates destination.
- The **National Football League** will not issue any uniform guidelines for stadium capacity ahead of the regular season.
 - The number of fans at stadiums will be determined on a "market-by-market basis" with "guidance" coming from public health officials along with local and state guidelines, a league spokesperson confirms to CNN.
- **U.S. laboratory giant Laboratory Corp of America** said it has been able to reduce turnaround times for Covid-19 test results to two to three days on average from about three to five days the week prior, thanks to additional screening capacity. The company said it's working to keep cutting down how long patients wait for results, and that it expects that to happen "as additional equipment and supplies become available."
- **Major League Baseball** today lost its first two games to the persistent coronavirus pandemic, just days into the start of a truncated 60-game season. After 12 Miami Marlins players and two coaches tested positive for Covid-19, according to ESPN, the team canceled its home opener. Shortly thereafter, the Philadelphia Phillies—the Marlins' opponent this past weekend—postponed their Monday game against the New York Yankees.

