



COVID-19 UPDATE November 16, 2020

Global

Total cases – 54,826,773

Total deaths – 1,323,093

United States

Total cases – 11,190,611

Total deaths – 247,116

The United States surpassed 11 million coronavirus cases this week, and the death toll is rapidly approaching 250,000. Nearly 170,000 new cases were reported in the country on Saturday alone, the eleventh straight day that infections exceeded 100,000. Wyoming, Oklahoma, Montana, and South Dakota set single-day records for deaths on Saturday, and West Virginia, Maryland, Minnesota, Indiana, Utah, North Dakota, and Montana set single-day records for new cases.

Trump Administration

- The **Trump administration** is stepping back from negotiations on a new stimulus package and leaving it up to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to revive long-stalled talks with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. While the White House probably would consult with GOP lawmakers on details of a Covid-19 relief bill, it's now unlikely to take the lead on talks.
- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** published [guidance](#) for celebrating Thanksgiving safely. Key recommendations include wearing masks, washing hands frequently, eating outdoors, and avoiding indoor gatherings with people outside your immediate household.
- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** issued a [brief](#) Tuesday detailing the benefits of masks to wearers, not just those around them. The report states that wearing masks helps reduce inhalation of virus-laden droplets.
- More than 130 **Secret Service** agents are in quarantine because they tested positive for COVID-19 or had close contact with infected co-workers. The outbreak is believed to be linked to President Trump's campaign travel and rallies.
- Covid-19 cases are increasing in 94% of U.S. jurisdictions, and the death rate in non-metro areas is more than double that in urban areas, according to **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**.
- **Anthony Fauci**, the top U.S. infectious-disease expert, said Americans less at risk for contracting Covid-19 could have access to a vaccine by April.
 - "I would say by April you'll be able to be vaccinated," he said on CNN, indicating the time frame was an estimate.
 - The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** is in charge of prioritizing who will get a shot first. Health-care providers and high-risk groups such as the elderly would likely be

at the front of the line, Fauci said. He said in a CNN interview yesterday that some of the first vaccinations could come at the end of the month or December.

Biden Presidential Transition

- On Thursday, **President-elect Biden** spoke with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer about the need for coronavirus relief legislation.
- **President-elect Joe Biden's** team will begin meeting with Pfizer Inc. and other pharmaceutical companies within days as they continue the transition to a new administration amid the escalating coronavirus pandemic, his chief of staff said Sunday.
 - "We're going to have meetings between our top scientific advisers and the officials of these drug companies, not just Pfizer but there are other promising vaccines as well. We're going to start those consultations this week," Ron Klain said on NBC's "Meet the Press."
- **Two of President-elect Joe Biden's** coronavirus advisers said they favor targeted local measures to stem the pandemic and oppose a nationwide U.S. lockdown as too blunt.
 - Vivek Murthy, a former U.S. surgeon general who's one of Biden's top three advisers on the virus, said that based on what the nation has learned about Covid-19 since the spring, the preferred approach to fighting it is "a dial that we turn up and down, depending on severity."

Congress

- **House Speaker Nancy Pelosi** called again for negotiations with Republicans on a fiscal-stimulus package, saying the spike in Covid-19 cases is a "red alert," while stopping short of offering new proposals for a compromise.
 - "Our focus in the lame duck continues to be on Covid relief -- this is a red alert," Pelosi said at a press briefing Friday at the Capitol, referring to the congressional session preceding the installation of the new administration in January. "I urge Republicans to acknowledge the crisis and come to the table to work on Covid relief."
 - The House returned to session this week, with no public schedule for any renewal in stimulus negotiations. **Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell**, on whom the White House this week effectively placed in charge of representing the Republican side on the issue, underscored Thursday his opposition to a package of the size Pelosi wants.
 - Pelosi and **Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer** Thursday reiterated that their \$2.4 trillion proposal needs to be the starting point for talks. McConnell has advocated for about \$500 billion, a top-line number well below the Trump administration's roughly \$1.9 trillion negotiating position before Election Day.

Vaccines, Treatments, and Testing

- **Moderna** announced Monday that early data suggests its COVID-19 vaccine could be up to 94.5% effective. The company plans to seek emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration in the coming weeks. Moderna also reported that its vaccine candidate has a longer shelf life in a refrigerator and at room temperature than the company expected, which should make it easier to store and distribute.
- **Dr. Anthony Fauci** said the news that both Moderna and Pfizer's vaccine trials have produced promising results is "a really strong step forward to where we want to be about getting control with this outbreak," and predicted that a vaccine could be available to high-risk individuals by the end of December.

- **The American Clinical Laboratory Association**, which represents large laboratories such as Laboratory Corp. of America Holdings and Quest Diagnostics Inc., warned that surging demand for Covid-19 tests could push some labs to or beyond capacity, delaying test results.
 - Members' labs performed a record 495,000 polymerase chain reaction, or PCR, tests for Covid-19 on Wednesday and while they're working to expand capacity, labs have faced challenges obtaining supplies like pipette tips, according to the group.
- By spring, there could be enough vaccine for general public vaccination, **HHS Secretary Azar** said this week
 - Speaking about a possible distribution schedule for vaccines from Pfizer or other drugmakers, Azar said there would be enough for nursing homes and health-care workers by the end of January.
- The world may be able to vaccinate enough people to get the coronavirus pandemic under control by mid-2022, said Ugur Sahin, chief executive officer of **BioNTech**, **Pfizer's** Covid-19 vaccine partner.

Other

- Many areas across the country have imposed new restrictions over the past week:
 - **New Jersey** Governor Phil Murphy said Monday that the state will lower indoor gathering limits from 25 to 10. The outdoor gatherings limit will drop from 500 to 150.
 - On Wednesday, **Michigan** will begin a three-week partial lockdown. Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced that the state will close in-person dining at restaurants, limit bars, and temporarily close high schools.
 - **Washington** Governor Jay Inslee reimposed restrictions on social gatherings that will be in effect from Monday through December 14. Indoor dining is banned, outdoor dining is limited to five people, indoor gatherings with people outside the same household are prohibited, and grocery stores and retailers are limited to 25% capacity. Childcare services and K-12 education will not be affected by the restrictions.
 - **New Mexico's** non-essential businesses will close for two weeks beginning Monday.
 - **Oregon** Governor Kate Brown ordered a two-week "freeze" that will limit capacity at grocery stores and pharmacies, close gyms, and restrict restaurants to take-out only. Indoor and outdoor gatherings will be limited to six people, and wearing masks is required, indoors and outdoors, except when eating and drinking. These restrictions will take effect Wednesday.
 - New restrictions in **Virginia** went into effect Monday, reducing the number of people allowed to gather indoors or outdoors to 25 and imposing new limits on restaurants and businesses.
 - **San Francisco** will close indoor dining and reduce capacity on businesses such as gyms and movie theaters after a dramatic increase in virus cases.
 - **New York** will order bars, restaurants and gyms closed at 10 p.m. and limit indoor gatherings to 10 people, Governor Andrew Cuomo said.
 - **Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot** on Thursday issued an advisory urging residents to avoid leaving home except for work, school and other essentials as new Covid-19 cases and hospitalizations surge.
 - **Philadelphia** is setting some of the nation's tightest restrictions to stop the winter surge of the pandemic, closing high schools, colleges and museums, and ending indoor restaurant dining.
 - The **Navajo Nation** reinstated a stay-at-home order on Monday that is scheduled to last three weeks.

