

News Highlights:

- Bristol Meyer's **Zeposia (Ozanimod)** once-a-day pill was approved by the U.S. FDA to treat **relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis (MS)**. The drug's launch will be delayed due to the COVID-19 situation. Multiple sclerosis affects nearly 1 million people in the United States and is a potentially disabling disease in which the immune system attacks the protective myelin sheath that covers the nerves. In clinical trials, Zeposia was compared with MS drug **Avonex**.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bristol-myers-fda/u-s-fda-approves-bristol-myers-ms-drug-coronavirus-to-delay-launch-idUSKBN21D1GS>

- **Insulin** and some other medications such as **growth hormone (somatropin)**, pancreatic drug **pancrelipase**, and some fertility treatments like **chorionic gonadotropin** and **menotropins** transitioned this week to be **regulated as biological products** instead of as chemical drugs. According to the FDA, "the availability of safe and effective biosimilar and interchangeable versions of these treatments, including insulin, is expected to increase patient access, adding more choices and potentially reducing costs of these vital therapies."

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/insulin-gains-new-pathway-increased-competition>
<https://www.fda.gov/media/135341/download> (2-page PDF for patients explaining the change)

- After less than one year, the FDA has **concluded its pilot program** that aimed to promote transparency about the drug approval process by sharing data with the public on **clinical trials used as part of a select set of new drug applications**. An example **Sponsor Clinical Study Report** was for prostate cancer drug **Erleada**. It is not clear if the FDA plans to bring back any aspect of the program.

<http://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-continues-support-transparency-and-collaboration-drug-approval-process-clinical-data-summary>

- The CDC reported that between 2014 and 2016, the number of children diagnosed with **autism spectrum disorder (ASD)** by age 8 **increased by ten percent**. One in 54 children in 2016 was diagnosed with ASD, with boys still four to five times more likely than girls to be diagnosed.

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0326-autism-prevalence-rises.html>

Coronavirus News – Advisories and Warnings

- In a statement issued on Saturday, the CDC urged residents of **New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut** to refrain from non-essential domestic travel for 14 days.

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s038-travel-advisory.html>

- The FDA is helping facilitate **veterinary telemedicine** during the coronavirus pandemic for some situations that would normally require in-person examinations.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-helps-facilitate-veterinary-telemedicine-during-pandemic>

- FDA is informing health care providers and patients of the **potential risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 virus by the use of fecal microbiota** for transplantation (FMT). This is a new treatment that is used for C. difficile infection in patients that have not responded to standard therapies.

<https://www.fda.gov/safety/medical-product-safety-information/fecal-microbiota-transplantation-safety-alert->

[regarding-additional-safety-protections-pertaining](#)

- Many **pregnant women** have health concerns during this COVID-19 outbreak. It appears that it is possible for the virus to be transferred to the fetus if the mother becomes infected. In one report from China, 3 out of 33 pregnant women with the virus transferred it to their babies, but all three babies survived.

<https://www.latimes.com/science/story/2020-03-26/coronavirus-pregnant-women-with-covid-19-babies>

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/03/26/new-reports-raise-possibility-pregnant-women-can-pass-coronavirus-to-fetus-but-risk-is-unclear/>

Coronavirus News – Supplies and Testing

- The FDA issued an emergency use authorization of **ventilators for patients and protective respirators for hospital caregivers** -- both of which are in short supply at hospitals. In addition, General Motors is to begin manufacturing ventilators under orders allowed by the Defense Protection Act. The **American Hospital Association** issued a statement regarding the situation.

<https://www.aha.org/advisory/2020-03-23-coronavirus-update-fda-releases-guidance-mitigate-ventilator-supply-disruptions>

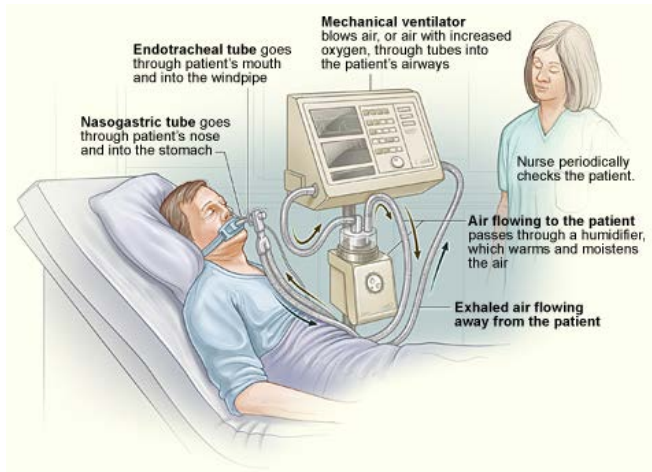


Image source: National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

To learn more about **ventilators**, including why they are used, the risks of being on one, and how they work, check out this series of questions and answers at the NHLBI.

<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/ventilatorventilator-support>

- The number of companies planning to produce **COVID-19 diagnostic tests** continues to grow. The FDA has received application notifications from 190 test developers, and 16 emergency use authorizations have been issued for nation-wide use. Also, more than 100 laboratories have submitted notification of lab-developed tests. This page at FDA has information both for consumers and industry about diagnostic testing for COVID-19:

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-diagnostic-testing-sars-cov-2>

Coronavirus News –Trials and Treatments

- National Institutes of Health began clinical trial in Nebraska testing **remdesivir** for potential treatment of Covid-19.

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-clinical-trial-remdesivir-treat-covid-19-begins>

- The Albert Einstein Hospital in Sao Paulo is leading a trial with other Brazilian hospitals to test the effectiveness of **hydroxychloroquine** in combination with the **antibiotic azithromycin** on patients with COVID-19.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-brazil-drug/brazil-doctor-urges-caution-on-coronavirus-game-changer-drug-idUSKBN21C3E5?>

- The U.S. FDA is permitting emergency investigational use of **convalescent plasma** to treat COVID-19. **New York Blood Center** has started collecting donations.

<https://nybc.org/news/articles/new-york-blood-center-collect-first-blood-plasma-donations-recovered-covid-19-patients-treat-severe-cases>

- A small study published in *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* found that the **functioning of the lungs** improve when the COVID-19 patient is **face down (prone)** position.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200324202056.htm>

Coronavirus News – Discoveries and Predictions

- In a study by Yale University, researchers found that half of the patients they treated for mild COVID-19 infection **still had coronavirus for up to eight days** after symptoms disappeared. Researchers say severe infections may have even longer shedding times.

<https://scitechdaily.com/covid-19-patients-can-still-have-coronavirus-up-to-8-days-after-symptoms-disappear/>

- Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) said at a White House press conference that a **seasonal cycle to the pandemic is possible**, and that warm weather could ease the pandemic in parts of North America and Europe, but that it could reemerge later. A team at University of Utah is working on studying how inactive novel coronavirus particles respond to various **environmental conditions**.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2020/03/24/warm-humid-weather-coronavirus/>

- Viruses are strange things – they exist not as living cells but as **zombie-like pathogens** that have even remained viable in permafrost for thousands of years. When the virus gets into a host, such as the human airway, it can hijack cells and replicate itself millions of times within a matter of hours. Read more about the science of the **SARS-COV-2** virus.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/03/23/coronavirus-isnt-alive-thats-why-its-so-hard-kill/>

- Peter Thielen, a molecular geneticist at Johns Hopkins University who has been studying the **SARS-COV-2** virus, says that because of its slow mutation rate, an **eventual vaccine** will most likely consist of a **single shot** (like vaccines for chickenpox or measles) rather than a yearly shot like we have to protect against the ever-changing influenza viruses. Two other virologists, who were on the international committee that named the novel coronavirus COVID-19, concurred that the **virus appears relatively stable**, and that it has not mutated significantly since first being identified in patients in China late last year.

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/world/coronavirus-isnt-mutating-quickly-a-vaccine-could-offer-lasting-protection-scientists-45515205>

Coronavirus: New Cases and Stats

- Yet another cruise ship with sick passengers is stuck at sea with nowhere to dock. Holland America's "**The Zaandam**" has 138 sick people out of 1,829 on board, and 4 passengers have died. Passengers have been confined to their rooms since March 22, when the first patients began to experience symptoms. Healthy patients (without symptoms) were transferred to "The Rotterdam." Both ships plan to pass through the Panama Canal and head to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. There are around 12 cruise ships still at sea around the world, most of which have no cases of sickness.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/cruises/2020/03/28/covid-19-holland-america-splitting-up-its-healthy-sick-passengers/2933381001/>

- Check out these graphics picked by **Visual Capitalist** as the "**7 Best Covid-19 Resources**." Includes Coronavirus Simulator: Limiting the Exponential Spread; The History of Pandemics, and more.

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/7-best-covid-19-resources/>

- According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, as of March 27 there were **571,678 confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide**, with 62,514 new cases occurring in the most recent day. The **U.S.** now has the most number of cases in the world, surpassing Italy's numbers.

[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) dashboard

- More than **124,000 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in the U.S.**, with 2,109 deaths, as of March 29 at 9:00 AM EST, according to the **Johns Hopkins Coronavirus** dashboard. Also for the same time, the dashboard reports **681,706 cases worldwide**. (The smaller number of worldwide cases reported by WHO is likely due to "case" definition, sources of reporting, and lags in reporting times.)

Here is a breakdown of states with more than 2,000 confirmed cases as of Sunday morning EST. **New York** has the most number of cases by far, with New York City having more than half (over 30,000) of that state's cases.

Link to **real-time** [Johns Hopkins Coronavirus](#) dashboard.

Number of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 by State

as reported March 29, 2020 Johns Hopkins
Coronavirus Dashboard for states with
more than 2,000 cases (9:00 AM EST)

53,520 New York
11,124 New Jersey
5,648 California
4,659 Michigan
4,311 Washington
4,257 Massachusetts
4,038 Florida
3,498 Illinois
3,315 Louisiana
2,909 Pennsylvania
2,534 Texas
2,446 Georgia
2,063 Colorado

Please vote in our latest opinion poll and share the link:

**How would you rate the media coverage of the novel coronavirus in terms of
1)quality and 2)quantity?**

- **Good; right amount of coverage**
- **Good; too much coverage**

- Too alarmist; right amount of coverage
- Too alarmist; too much coverage
- Other (list below)

[Vote!](#)

AskaPatient Weekly Healthcare News: March 29, 2020

Trouble viewing this email? View it as a [web page](#).

Subscribe and visit us at <https://www.askapatient.com>

Check out the up-to-date health news feed on our web site:

[Pharm News](#)

[Unsubscribe](#) from the weekly newsletter.

Please contact us with suggestions, comments, or questions:

admin@askapatient.com

We welcome your feedback.



Copyright © **|CURRENT_YEAR|** AskaPatient ®