

Health News

- More recalls were announced for **diabetes drug metformin**. **Lupin Pharmaceuticals** recalled all batches of 500mg and 1000mg Metformin Hydrochloride Extended-Release tablets. So far, a total of 75 extended-release product versions from five manufacturers are on the FDA recall list because of high levels of **NDMA** (a carcinogen). The FDA says that testing has not shown NDMA to be present in immediate release metformin products (the most commonly prescribed type of metformin).

<https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts/lupin-pharmaceuticals-inc-issues-voluntarily-nationwide-recall-metformin-hydrochloride-extended>

Metformin recalls list with product and lot information:

<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/search-list-recalled-metformin-products>

- The **Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee** released its report with recommendations that will be used as the basis for **2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for America**. The guidelines will affect everything from school lunches to physicians' advice about nutrition. One of the key takeaways from the report is that Americans need to reduce their added sugar intake. The committee recommends **reducing average sugar consumption** from 13% of daily calories to just 6%; this is the equivalent of 30g for someone on a 2,000 calorie-a-day diet. Also, it advises that children should not have any sweetened drinks before the age of two.

<https://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Article/2020/07/15/Americans-need-to-more-than-halve-their-consumption-of-added-sugars-says-Dietary-Guidelines-Advisory-Committee>

Public comments on the guidelines will be accepted until August 13.

<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/work-under-way/get-involved/submit-comment>

View current dietary guidelines and link to new report, including executive summary:

<https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>

- **Robot jaws** that mimic human jaws have been developed as a prototype "**artificial oral environment**" for testing the **chewing gum method of drug delivery**. A mechanical engineer and dental professor at University of Bristol tested their robot by assessing the amount of xylitol released from chewing gum via artificial saliva solutions collected after various intervals of continuous chewing.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/07/200714101226.htm>

- While some of the worst outbreaks of the novel coronavirus have been in long term care facilities, these University of Pennsylvania researchers have taken "lessons learned" to develop a **framework of policies and procedures** for **nursing home leaders** to improve management and care in nursing homes. "We are Alone in this Battle: a Framework for a Coordinated Response to COVID-19 in Nursing Homes."

<https://www.nursing.upenn.edu/live/news/1705-pandemic-inspires-framework-for-enhanced-care-in>

Concerns about Covid-19 Case Data:

- **India** added a record number of coronavirus cases in a 24 hour period, almost 35,000, bringing them over the one million mark for the first time. The country has the **third-highest case load in the world**, after the U.S. and Brazil. However, it has an unusually low death rate (14 per million vs. 392 per million in the U.S.). Experts say that because many deaths go unreported in India, its coronavirus death rates are probably higher than what is reported.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-53440913>

- In the U.K., **release of death counts has been temporarily halted** because of concerns that Public Health England has been 'over-exaggerating' fatalities by counting people as victims **if they die of any cause at any time after testing positive** for the virus. Reported deaths per million in the UK: 651, the second highest in the world, after **Belgium**. (see BBC link above for chart).

<https://metro.co.uk/2020/07/18/daily-uk-death-toll-paused-amid-claims-numbers-are-exaggerated-13007585/>

- It is difficult to compare coronavirus case and death data for different countries when each country has different reporting criteria. For example, in **Belgium**, which has an **843 per million death rate**, experts say that over 50% of deaths in Belgium "are deaths that have not been confirmed by diagnostic tests. These are possible cases but have been reported as Covid-19 related deaths."

<https://www.brusselstimes.com/all-news/belgium-all-news/health/120258/why-belgium-still-has-the-highest-coronavirus-death-rate-in-the-world/>

2020-2021 Flu Season: Flu Prevention During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Because of COVID-19, this year's flu season brings with it heightened patient concerns about contracting the flu. Understandably, hospitals are also concerned as they want to avoid having to treat an influx of patients sick with seasonal flu during the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. To minimize chances of influenza outbreak, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) encourages everyone over the age of six months to get a flu shot this season.

This year, as in previous years, the CDC recommends that people get their flu shots **starting in September**. While patients may be anxious to get their vaccine right away, an early vaccine might not be effective for the duration of the flu season, which usually lasts from late fall until early spring. The CDC has recommended procedures for **safely administering vaccines** in various settings. They have also recommended that those with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 wait to receive their flu shot.

Demand for flu vaccines this year is expected to exceed last year's supply levels, so manufacturers have pledged to boost production by 10%, for a total of at least **189 million doses this season in the U.S.** Vaccine maker Sanofi told *the Guardian* that it will increase global production by 20%, but that "global demand will outpace supply. All these additional requests that have come in context of covid are beyond our anticipated and planned supply." Over the past four flu seasons, the U.S. has seen a steady increase in vaccination rates. During 2019-2020, about 174.5 million flu vaccines were given, about a 3 percent increase over the previous year.

These are the vaccines available this flu season, with age ranges, type, and company.

2020-2021 Flu Vaccine Choices

FLU VACCINE	AGE RANGE	TYPE	PRODUCTION	COMPANY
AFLURIA QUADRIVALENT*	6 months and up	shot	egg-based	Seqirus
FLUAD QUADRIVALENT (adjuvanted)	65 and up	shot	egg-based	Seqirus
FLUAD TRIVALENT (adjuvanted)	65 and up	shot	egg-based	Seqirus
FLUARIX QUADRIVALENT*	6 months and up	shot	egg-based	Glaxo
FLUBLOK QUADRIVALENT	18 and up	shot	genetic recombining process	Sanofi
FLUCELVAX QUADRIVALENT*	4 and up	shot	cell-based	Seqirus
FLULAVAL QUADRIVALENT*	6 months and up	shot	egg-based	Glaxo
FLUMIST QUADRIVALENT	2 and 49	nasal spray	egg-based with live weakened vaccine	AstraZeneca
FLUZONE QUADRIVALENT (High Dose)	65 and up	shot	egg-based	Sanofi
FLUZONE QUADRIVALENT*	6 months and up	shot	egg-based	Sanofi

chart by AskaPatient.com, July 2020 from CDC, FDA Vaccine and DailyMed database

*Doses obtained from vials contain preservatives; prefilled syringes do not

What's different for the 2020-2021 flu season?

With one exception, all flu shots administered this season, including **Fluad Quadrivalent** and **Fluzone High Dose** for seniors age 65 and up, will be "**quadrivalent**," meaning they will contain four influenza virus strains. One trivalent (three virus strains) version of **Fluad** for seniors will also be available.

The CDC does not recommend one of these stronger vaccines for seniors over the other. A Duke University (along with CDC, Boston Medical Center, and Cincinnati Children's Medical Center) [clinical trial](#) compared the side effects of **Fluzone High Dose** with **Fluad**, and preliminary tables of results suggest that Fluad had lower incidence of side effects, but the quality control review of the study has not yet been completed. Both Fluzone High Dose and Fluad tend to have more side effects than standard-dose flu vaccines.

Continue this article, which contains:

- chart with total flu shots given September - February for the last four flu seasons
- 2020-2021 vaccine's four influenza strains
- which vaccines contain preservative
- links to references and resources:
- how vaccines are made
- frequently asked questions about the 2020-2021 flu season and COVID-19 considerations
- "Vaccine Finder" database of pharmacies, grocery stores, or health establishments where you can get a specific flu shot or vaccine (including other kinds of vaccines, like shingles)

Click to read the complete article:

<https://www.askapatient.com/news/flu-vaccines-for-2020-2021.asp>

Updated Covid-19 stats for Sunday, July 19, 2020: Worldwide: 14.3 million cases and over 600,000 deaths. **United States:** 3.7 million cases and more than 140,000 deaths. Brazil has the second-highest number of cases globally with over 2.1 million cases. India has 1.1 million cases.

Source: Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Dashboard

Ask a Patient Weekly Healthcare Newsletter: July 19, 2020

Please click "Vote" to answer our latest survey, which aims to find out how consumers feel about antibody testing:

Are you going to get a coronavirus antibody test?

No; no past symptoms/not interested

No; the results aren't reliable enough

Yes; had past symptoms

Yes; no past symptoms but am curious

Yes; as part of community study

Other; list below

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