

Health News

Safer salads and **healthier pizza** could be in the works for U.S. consumers, based on two separate FDA announcements this week:

- First, the FDA is collaborating with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on a new protocol for registration of products that can **treat agricultural water against foodborne bacteria**. This could provide farmers with a useful tool to help protect the safety of produce intended for consumers, like **romaine lettuce** and other leafy greens. Multiple **E.coli outbreaks** from romaine lettuce dating back to 2013 have been linked to contaminated agricultural (irrigation) water.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-announces-new-protocol-development-and-registration-treatments-preharvest-agricultural-water>

- Three manufacturers of certain per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (**PFAS**), a **grease-proofing substance** used in paperboard for **food packaging** (including **molded fiber bowls** at fast casual take-out restaurants, microwave popcorn bags, and **pizza boxes**), have voluntarily agreed to phase-out their sales of these substances for use as food contact substances in the United States over the next three years. A fourth company notified the FDA in 2019 that it has already stopped selling it in the U.S. Concerns have been raised for years about potential human health risks from chronic dietary exposure to the substance.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-announces-voluntary-agreement-manufacturers-phase-out-certain-short-chain-pfas-used-food>

Questions and Answers about PFAS

<https://www.fda.gov/food/chemicals/questions-and-answers-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-food>

- A **recall** of red, white, yellow, and sweet **onions** has been issued in the U.S. and Canada because of a multistate link to salmonella cases. 396 total illnesses have been reported including 59 hospitalizations. Brand names include Thomson Premium, TLC Thomson International, Tender Loving Care, El Competitor, Hartley's Best, Onions 52, Majestic, Imperial Fresh, Kroger, Utah Onions and Food Lion.

<https://www.fda.gov/safety/recalls-market-withdrawals-safety-alerts/thomson-international-inc-conducts-voluntary-recall-red-yellow-white-and-sweet-yellow-onions-because>

Coronavirus News

- Two new **antibody tests** were authorized by the FDA that **estimate the quantity of a patient's antibodies** produced against infection with the virus that causes COVID-19: Siemens' ADVIA Centaur COV2G and Attelica COV2G. Prior serology tests only detected the **presence** of antibodies.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-authorizes-first-tests-estimate-patients-antibodies-past-sars-cov-2>

- **Health Canada** approved its first drug to treat COVID-19: **remdesivir** (brand name **Veklury**), will be used to treat patients with severe symptoms of COVID-19, who have pneumonia and require extra oxygen to breathe. In Canada, the authorization included a full scientific review, and there is no preset expiration date on the authorization as there is in the U.S. and some other countries. <https://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2020/73621a-eng.php>

Patient Guide to Coronavirus Websites

During the past six months, we have recommended various tools, databases, and articles for learning more about the novel coronavirus. These have conveniently been compiled into one directory, "***Patient Guide to Coronavirus Websites.***"

The guide contains referrals to **33 authoritative web sites** divided into these ten sections: *learning about the virus, staying safe/prevention, testing information, drugs and treatments for COVID-19, vaccines in development, medical research, clinical trials research, statistics on cases and testing, volunteer opportunities for vaccine clinical trials, and blood and blood plasma donations.*

Here are five of the ten sections:

Drugs and Treatments for COVID-19

NIH Official Treatment Guidelines

This page from the National Institutes of Health outlines the guidance for each level of infection: from asymptomatic (or pre-symptomatic) to the most severe. Because no drug has been officially approved to treat COVID-19 (only emergency use authorizations have been granted in the U.S.), all of the treatments are considered to be under investigation.

<https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/overview/management-of-covid-19/>

National COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma Project: Convalescent Plasma Treatment Locations

Scroll down for the index by state to find a list of treatment locations in your area.

https://ccpp19.org/seeking_treatment/index.html

FDA List of Products for COVID-19 Disease with EUA

Includes list of ventilators and other medical devices, drug products (including remdesivir for certain hospitalized patients). These emergency use authorizations (EUA) "allow unapproved medical products or unapproved uses of approved medical products to be used in an emergency to diagnose, treat, or prevent serious or life-threatening diseases or conditions caused by CBRN threat agents when there are no adequate, approved, and available alternatives."

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-legal-regulatory-and-policy-framework/emergency-use-authorization# covid19euas>

RAPS Drugs in Development

The Regulatory Affairs Professional Society also keeps track of therapeutic drugs under study or development. Many of these drugs already approved for other purposes are being used to treat patients. Currently, **35 treatments** are listed. Products are sortable by name, class, trial phase, and sponsor.

<https://www.raps.org/news-and-articles/news-articles/2020/3/covid-19-therapeutics-tracker>

Vaccines in Development

CDC Glossary of Vaccine-Related Terms

Not sure what is meant by an "adjuvanted" or "recombinant" vaccine? Here is a glossary of vaccine-related terms for the layman, with everything from "acellular vaccine" to "waning immunity" and "whooping cough." Includes some audio clips with pronunciations of the terms.

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/terms/glossary.html>

RAPS Covid-19 Vaccine Tracker

The Regulatory Affairs Professional Society maintains a database of **Covid-19 vaccine research**. It includes vaccines under development around the world, along with what phase they are in, sponsor, and source of funding. Click the green plus symbol on the right column to view study design and more detail about each of the **32 vaccines**.

<https://www.raps.org/news-and-articles/news-articles/2020/3/covid-19-vaccine-tracker>

COVID-19 Clinical Trials Information

European Union Clinical Trials Register

<https://www.clinicaltrialsregister.eu/ctr-search/search?query=covid-19>

ClinicalTrials.gov

Contains more than 1,000 COVID-19 drug and vaccine-related clinical trials.

<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?cond=COVID-19>

Volunteer Opportunities for Vaccine Trials in U.S.

ClinicalTrials.gov Vaccine Volunteer Opportunities

Currently, the site reports that Moderna, in conjunction with NIH, is recruiting 30,000 participants in 89 locations in the U.S. for "A Study to Evaluate Efficacy, Safety, and Immunogenicity of mRNA-1273 Vaccine in Adults Aged 18 Years and Older to Prevent COVID-19."

<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04470427#contacts>

Coronavirus Prevention Network

This new site recruits and provides information to vaccine trial volunteers.

<https://www.coronaviruspreventionnetwork.org/understanding-clinical-studies/>

Volunteer to Donate Blood or Blood Plasma

American Red Cross and AABB Blood Bank Locator

Blood donations in the U.S. have decreased due to the implementation of social distancing and the cancellation of blood drives. Health experts say that donating blood by appointment is safe. The American Red Cross is testing all blood, platelet, and plasma donations for coronavirus antibodies. Other locations, like hospitals, may not offer to perform the antibody test when you donate blood, since the infection has not been proven to be transmitted through blood transfusion.

AABB: <http://www.aabb.org/tm/donation/Pages/Blood-Bank-Locator.aspx>

American Red Cross: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/>

Volunteer to Donate Convalescent Plasma: National COVID-19 Convalescent Plasma Project

If you have fully recovered from COVID-19, you may consider donating your blood plasma. Because it contains antibodies to the virus, the plasma may be used as a treatment for those sick with COVID-19. Many hospitals, clinics, and blood donation centers are accepting donations. Database of requirements and locations:

<https://ccpp19.org/donors/index.html>

Next week, we'll feature the remaining sections and post a link to the entire guide (which will be continually updated) on our web site.

Updated Covid-19 stats for Sunday, August 2, 2020: **Worldwide:** 17.9 million cases and over 687,000 deaths. **United States:** 4.67 million cases and more than 154,000 deaths. Brazil has the second-highest number of cases globally with over 2.7 million cases. India has 1.75 million cases.

Source: Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Dashboard

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

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