

Health News

- After discontinuing a mixed-results third-stage clinical trial in March of 2019 for a potential **Alzheimer's drug**, Biogen and Eisai reconsidered the results for **aducanumab** and decided to apply for FDA approval in fall of 2019. This week, they announced that the U.S. FDA will conduct an expedited review of the drug. There has not been a treatment approved for Alzheimer's disease since 2003, and **aducanumab would be the first aimed at modifying disease progression rather than just its symptoms**. Aducanumab is not yet approved in any country.

<https://www.fiercebiotech.com/biotech/biogen-nabs-speedy-fda-review-for-controversial-alzheimer-s-drug>

- The U.S. FDA approved Trevena's **Olinvyk (oliceridine)**, a new intravenous **opioid** drug for the management of **moderate to severe pain in adults** for short-term intravenous use in hospitals and other controlled clinical settings, such as during inpatient and outpatient procedures.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-new-opioid-intravenous-use-hospitals-other-controlled-clinical-settings>

- The U.S. FDA approved Genentech's **Evrysdi (risdiplam)** to treat patients two months of age and older with **spinal muscular atrophy (SMA)**, a rare and often fatal genetic disease affecting muscle strength and movement. This is the second drug (Spinraza was the first) and the first oral drug approved to treat this disease; it can be taken at home.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-oral-treatment-spinal-muscular-atrophy>

- Some ingredients in drugs thought to be **"inert", including dyes, preservatives, and fillers**, may actually be biologically active and cause **unanticipated side effects**, according to research by University of California San Francisco.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/07/200723172210.htm>

- An autoimmune disease expert told CBS News his prediction that the upcoming **flu season** will be **much milder** than usual because of social distancing practices. However, he still recommends that everyone gets a flu shot.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-19-pandemic-flu-fall-doctor/>

Flu shots are now available. Read about your options for this flu season:

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

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

- In China, new case reports of **contagious diseases**, including mumps, measles, and especially influenza, have **dropped significantly** compared with last year.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-influenza/seasonal-flu-reports-hit-record-lows-amid-global-social-distancing-idUSKCN24W0F8>

- Consumer advocacy group **Public Citizen** filed a petition with the U.S. FDA requesting that a **boxed warning** (the most serious kind of drug warning) be added to the labels for canagliflozin (**Invokana**), dapagliflozin (**Farxiga**), empagliflozin (**Jardiance**) and ertugliflozin (**Steglagtro**). These SGLT2 inhibitor drugs used for **Type 2 diabetes** have a three-fold risk of causing diabetic **ketoacidosis** in patients with Type 1 diabetes, which can result in kidney injury, respiratory failure and death.

<https://www.citizen.org/news/fda-must-warn-patients-doctors-of-potentially-deadly-complications-from-common-diabetes-drugs/>

Coronavirus News

- While much attention is being given to antibody testing to estimate the level of a community's "herd immunity," a recent study of **memory T cells** suggests that **seroprevalence surveys may greatly underestimate immunity** to the novel coronavirus. Dr. Vincent Rajkumar, oncologist at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester says there are more factors that can affect one's level of immunity, including: 1. Low viral dose at exposure 2. Pre-existing cross-reactive immunity (such as from related viruses) 3. Genetic factors, such as a particular blood type.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshuacohen/2020/08/03/seroprevalence-studies-may-underestimate-immunity-to-the-coronavirus/#8a530d814f9f>

- Attorneys general from 34 states filed a citizen petition with the federal government requesting **generic competition and lower prices** for Gilead's drug **remdesivir** (brand name Veklury), one of only two drugs given emergency use authorization for treating severely ill (hospitalized) COVID-19 patients. The drug is in short supply, and the petition argues that the U.S. co-owns the core patents for the drug and invested more than \$70 million in its development. Gilead is charging patients \$520 per one-vial dose.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-remdesivir-idUSKCN250248>

- Could taking a **proton pump inhibitor (PPI)** heartburn or **GERD treatment** (like generic **omeprazole**, or brand name **Prilosec** or **Nexium**) increase your risk of testing positive for COVID-19? New research, pre-published in *Journal of Gastroenterology* and under extensive peer review, suggests there is a correlation. Less acid in the stomach makes it harder for the stomach to kill pathogens. Long-term use of PPIs have been shown to increase the risk of enteric (intestinal) infections.

<https://www.pharmacytimes.com/news/survey-finds-association-between-proton-pump-inhibitors-risk-of-covid-19>

- A new study suggests the **average incubation period** for COVID-19 may be twice as long as thought previously: almost 7.76 days instead of previous estimates of 4-5 days.

https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2020-08/aaft-cmh080720.php

- Yale researchers studied 1,827 COVID-19 patients who were hospitalized in the Yale New Haven Health system and found that the incidence of **abnormal liver tests** was between 41.6% and 83.4% of patients, depending on the specific liver test. This contrasts with studies done in China that found only 15% of COVID-19 patients having abnormal liver tests.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/08/200807131912.htm>

Patient Guide to Coronavirus Websites

Here are some great sites for finding diagnostic testing locations and a variety of data and statistics on the pandemic:

Testing Sites Locations

State Health Testing Sites Locator by State

Check with your doctor or health plan to find out where to get your test. Some testing centers require an authorization or an online authorization, but many do not; in those cases you can just show up or call to make an appointment. This CDC page has links to state health departments, which will have directories or maps of test centers in the state.

<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html>

Nationwide Testing Sites Locator

The interactive U.S. map has yellow dots for antibody testing sites, blue for diagnostic testing sites, and green dots if the site offers both kinds of tests. <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2ec47819f57c40598a4eaf45bf9e0d16>

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2ec47819f57c40598a4eaf45bf9e0d16>

Statistics and Cases

State by State Statistics, Travel Info: State Health Department Websites Directory

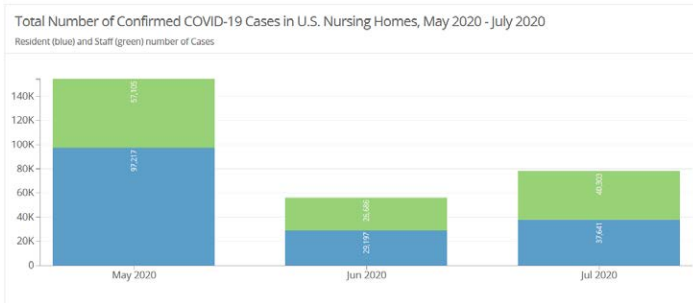
The link to state health departments is useful if you need to check the COVID-19 related travel restrictions and possible quarantine requirements, health statistics, status of business openings, and other recommendations and regulations in a particular state.

<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/healthdepartments.html>

CMS Nursing Home COVID-19 Cases and Hospitalizations Dashboard

Look up an **individual nursing home** to find out how it is faring in terms of covid cases and staff shortages. Center for Medicare Services (CMS) provides a variety of statistics related to COVID-19 at the state, county, and individual nursing home level. Data includes the number of confirmed (or suspected) covid cases, resident deaths,

covid deaths, number of beds available, hospital admissions, and number of occupied beds. It also includes data on number of cases among staff, whether there is a shortage of staff, and whether any patients are on ventilators. You can also create your own "data visualization" on the fly. Here is an example of a chart created with the tool, showing the number of new cases occurring among residents (blue) and staff (green) during May, June and July 2020.

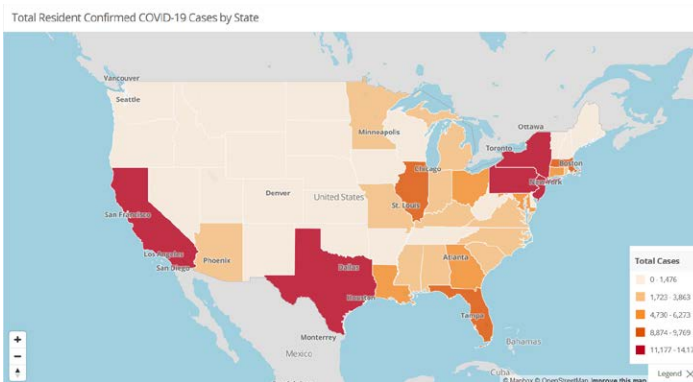


Access the data and the chart and map tools:

<https://data.cms.gov/Special-Programs-Initiatives-COVID-19-Nursing-Home/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Dataset/s2uc-8wxp/data>

For an overview of the nursing home data, and some **ready-made charts** like the one below, go to this page:

<https://data.cms.gov/stories/s/COVID-19-Nursing-Home-Data/bkwz-xpvg>



New York Times Nursing Home Statistics

While only 8 percent of the country's cases have occurred in long-term care facilities (including residents and staff), deaths related to Covid-19 in these facilities account for more than 41 percent of the country's pandemic fatalities. This site features various charts and statistics.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-nursing-homes.html>

CDC Testing Data Page: U.S. Testing Data

The CDC reports that 65,756,307 **diagnostic tests have been** conducted in the U.S. as of August 7. Around 5.8 million (9%) of them were positive.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/testing-in-us.html>

CDC Seroprevalence (Immunity) Data

The CDC has three pages that provide explanations and a growing body of data on antibody testing. For an explanation of the tests and surveys:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/about-serology-surveillance.html>

Data for these ten U.S. areas: Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, New York City, Philadelphia, San Francisco, South Florida, Utah and Western Washington

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/commercial-lab-surveys.html>

Interactive dashboard for viewing the data:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/commercial-labs-interactive-serology-dashboard.html>

Statista: Number of Tests Taken Globally

According to Statista, the U.S. has conducted the second-highest number of tests worldwide, with **63.4 million** tests conducted as of August 6. China reports having done the most testing, with 90.4 million tests taken (this number has not been updated since July 31).

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1028731/covid19-tests-select-countries-worldwide/>

Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Dashboard

Gives real-time case and death counts worldwide compiled from multiple sources.

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

Check out the complete directory of sites with descriptions, including newly added entries on drug shortages and testing statistics:

WHERE TO GO FOR COVID INFO	Number of Sources
Learning about the virus	3
Staying safe: preventing COVID-19	5
Testing information	6
Drugs and Treatments for COVID-19	4
Vaccines in Development	2
Medical and Scientific Publications	2
Clinical Trials Lists	2
Statistics on Testing, Cases, Hospitalizations, Deaths	5
Volunteering for Vaccine Trials	6
Blood and Convalescent Plasma Donations	2
www.askapatient.com/news/patient-guide-coronavirus-websites.asp	37

Updated Covid-19 stats for Sunday, August 9, 2020: **Worldwide:** 19.7 million cases and over 727,000 deaths. **United States:** 5 million cases and more than 162,000 deaths. Brazil has the second-highest number of cases globally with over 3 million cases.

Source: Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Dashboard

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

Ask a Patient Weekly Healthcare Newsletter: August 9, 2020

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