

Health News

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a new drug regimen of **Opdivo** (nivolumab) in combination with **Yervoy** (ipilimumab) for the first-line treatment of adults with malignant pleural **mesothelioma** that cannot be removed by surgery. About 20,000 Americans are diagnosed each year with mesothelioma, a life-threatening cancer of the lungs' lining caused by inhaling asbestos fibers.

[FDA news release](#)

- The **heart monitoring feature** on the **Apple Watch** may lead to unnecessary health care visits, according to a Mayo Clinic study. The study revealed that only around 10 percent of people who saw a doctor at the Mayo Clinic after noticing an abnormal pulse reading on their watch were eventually diagnosed with a cardiac condition.

[The Verge](#)

<https://www.theverge.com/2020/10/1/21496813/apple-watch-heart-monitor-ekg-false-positive>

- The U.S. FDA issued labeling recommendations for **breast implants** to improve patient understanding of **health risks**. These include breast implant-associated anaplastic large cell lymphoma (BIA-ALCL) and systemic symptoms commonly referred to as breast implant illness (BII) that some patients attribute to their implants, which can include fatigue, "brain fog," muscle or joint pain and rash.

[FDA Press Release](#)

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-issues-final-guidance-certain-labeling-recommendations-breast-implants>

- A newly identified genetic factor allows adult skin to repair itself like the **skin of a newborn**, holds potential for creating better skin wound treatments as well as preventing some of the aging process in skin. Washington State University researchers identified a factor in the skin of baby mice controlling **hair follicle formation**. When it was activated in adult mice, their skin was able to heal wounds without scarring, grow fur, and could even make goose bumps.

[Washington State University release](#)

<https://news.wsu.edu/2020/09/29/discovery-enables-adult-skin-regenerate-like-newborns/>

- A state program in Colorado has transformed six RVs into **mobile addiction treatment centers** that go to remote underserved towns. While brick-and-mortar addiction clinics have closed or stopped taking new patients during the pandemic, this fleet of six-wheeled clinics has kept going.

[Kaiser Health News](#)

<https://khn.org/news/health-on-wheels-tricked-out-rvs-deliver-addiction-treatment-to-rural-communities/>

- Aarhus University researchers discovered that **Parkinson's disease** can start in two distinct parts of the body. For some patients, the disease starts in the **intestines** and spreads from there to the brain through neural connections. For others, the disease starts in the **brain** and spreads to the intestines and other organs such as the heart. Researchers used advanced PET and MRI imaging techniques to examine people with Parkinson's disease as well as people who have not yet been diagnosed but have a high risk of developing the disease.

[Science Daily](#)

In a related story, check out Askpatient's **article on the history of l-dopa (levodopa)**.

<https://www.askpatient.com/news/parkinsons-levodopa.asp>

- Associated Press reported that there was an overall dip in **military suicides** during the first three months of 2020 compared with the same time last year. But when the **pandemic** hit in the spring, the numbers increased by as much as 20%. Senior army leaders say they've seen about a 30% jump in active duty suicides so far this year and that they are looking at shortening combat deployments.

[Associated Press](https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-air-force-stress-archive-army-2be5e2d741c1798fad3f79ca2f2c14dd)

<https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-air-force-stress-archive-army-2be5e2d741c1798fad3f79ca2f2c14dd>

- The U.S. House Oversight Committee, armed with thousands of pages of internal company documents, questioned **six drug companies** (including Mallinckrodt, Amgen, Novartis, Celgene, Bristol Myers Squibb and Teva) about their **drug pricing** practices. Rep. **Katie Porter** (CA) grilled the CEO of Celgene over the **price gouging** of multiple myeloma drug [Revlimid](#) (click for drug reviews.)

"You received half a million dollars, personally, just by tripling the price of Revlimid," Porter said. "To recap here, the drug didn't get any better. The cancer patients didn't get any better. You just got better at making money." Porter noted that taxpayers spent **\$3.3 billion on Revlimid** for **Medicare beneficiaries**. This *Kaiser Health News* article includes a 5-minute video of Rep. Porter's exchange with Celgene CEO.

[Kaiser Health News: Sky High Drug Prices Driven by Pharma Profits:](https://khn.org/news/sky-high-drug-prices-driven-by-pharma-profits-house-dems-charge/)

<https://khn.org/news/sky-high-drug-prices-driven-by-pharma-profits-house-dems-charge/>

- **Fecal transplants** could one day be used to restore **cognitive decline** among the elderly. A new study shows how fecal transplants from older to younger mice altered their gut microbiome, which in turn impacted their spatial learning and memory. The research team hope the reverse could also be true, and one day used as a therapy to restore cognitive function in older people. University of East Anglia, the University of Florence and the Quadram Institute conducted the study.

[Science Daily](#)

- Why do 20% of children who receive **cancer chemotherapy** go on to develop **heart failure** 30 or 40 years later? Cancer chemotherapy changes the function of cells that repair heart injury, researchers at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UT Health San Antonio) discovered. The journal *PLOS ONE* published the results Sept. 22 during Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

[Science Daily](#)

- UC Irvine Researchers revealed how subanesthetic **ketamine**, which is used for pain management and more recently as an antidepressant, is also effective in treating **adult amblyopia**, a brain disorder commonly known as '**lazy eye**.'

[Science Daily](#)

COVID-19 News

- **President Donald Trump** has been hospitalized with COVID-19 since Friday at Walter Reed Military Hospital, outside of Washington DC. He has been treated with **remdesivir**. A growing group of world leaders have been infected with the virus, including heads of state from Brazil, Belarus, Honduras, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Monaco, and United Kingdom.



Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland

(source: <https://tricare.mil/>)

[Washington Post](#)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/10/02/trump-world-leaders-test-positive-for-coronavirus/>

- A University of Rochester Medical Center study suggests that **past exposures to the common cold** may provide some protection from covid-19. They also found that SARS-CoV-2 invokes **memory B cells**, long-lived immune cells that detect pathogens for a long time. This means COVID-19 survivors could have long-lasting immunity to the virus.

[URMC news release](#)

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/news/story/can-the-common-cold-help-protect-you-from-covid-19>

- More than 7,000 **minks** at ranches in Utah have died from COVID-19, forcing nine sites in three counties to quarantine. Minks seem particularly susceptible to COVID-19, likely because of a protein in their lungs, the ACE2 receptor, which is also present in humans.

[Kaiser Health News](#)

<https://khn.org/news/thousands-of-minks-dead-as-covid-outbreak-escalates-on-utah-farms/>

- The U.S. FDA has widened its investigation of **Oxford/Astrazeneca's vaccine trial**, which remains halted in the U.S. While other vaccine developers have used human adenoviruses for coronavirus vaccines, the Oxford researchers chose to use an adenovirus found in **chimpanzees**. Reuters reviewed other vaccine studies that used the chimpanzee adenovirus. The type of review being conducted by the FDA is generally intended to scrutinize raw data for other side effects.

[Reuters](#) report

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vaccine-astrazenec-idUSKBN26L3TA>

- *USA Today* reports that by the end of July, about 9% of Americans had been exposed to COVID-19. But that's a long way off from "**herd immunity**," or having enough infections to prevent further spread of the virus, according to epidemiologists.

[USA Today](#)

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/09/25/herd-immunity-study-us-infection-rate-too-low-prevent-covid-spread-lancet/3518749001/>

- Patients who are still recovering from COVID-19 are increasingly being treated at "**post-COVID clinics**". About 10% of treated U.S. COVID patients may have longer-running effects, said Dr. Zijian Chen, medical director of the Center for Post-COVID Care at **Mount Sinai**, which has enrolled 400 patients so far. Other similar clinics have been launched at the University of California-San Francisco, Stanford University Medical Center and the University of Pennsylvania.

[Kaiser Health News](#)

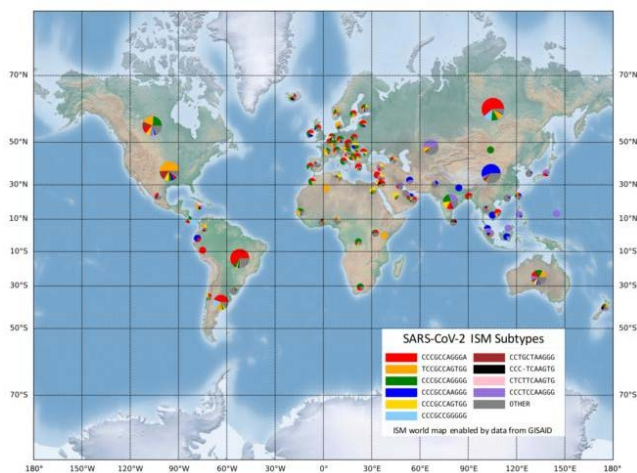
<https://khn.org/news/post-covid-clinics-help-patients-recover-from-long-term-physical-mental-effects-of-coronavirus/>

- Social isolation worsens the effects of **Alzheimer's disease**, with an increase in hyperactivity levels (including gross and fine motor movements), and an increase in the asymmetric atrophy of the hippocampus, a brain area central to memory. The study was published in a special edition of *Frontiers in Psychiatry*.

[Eureka Alert](#)

- Drexel University researchers are using a new technique for spotting patterns in the **genetic sequence of SARS-CoV-2** and how it has **mutated**, suggesting that there are at least 8 to 14 slightly different versions of the virus infecting people in America. The researchers have made the tool publicly available to covid-19 researchers on Github.

<https://sciencecodex.com/genetic-tracing-barcode-rapidly-revealing-covid-19s-journey-and-evolution-657885>



Source: Drexel University: "Genetic tracing 'barcode' is rapidly revealing COVID-19's journey and evolution"

Updated Covid-19 stats for Sunday, October 4, 2020: Worldwide totals: 34.96 million cases and over 1 million deaths. **United States totals:** 7.38 million cases and more than 209,000 deaths. India has recorded over 6.59 million cases. Brazil has the third-highest number of cases globally with over 4.9 million cases.

Source: Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Dashboard

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

Ask a Patient Weekly Healthcare Newsletter: October 4, 2020

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Guidance, statistics, and referrals to authoritative websites:

[Patient Guide to Coronavirus Websites](#)

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Feature article: [2020-2021 Flu Shot Options Amid Covid-19](#)

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 recombinating 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

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