

## Ask a Patient Health News June 12, 2022

### Health News: June 12, 2022

- The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) expanded the use of Regeneron's dupilumab (**Dupixent**) to treat moderate-to-severe **eczema** in young children 6 months to 5 years old. The drug is administered by injection using a prefilled medication pen every other week or every four weeks, depending on patient age and weight. (Dupixent [patient reviews](#))

<https://www.dupixent.com/atopicdermatitis/about-dupixent/results-in-infants>

- The FDA expanded the use of mycophenolate mofetil (**CellCept**) for use in pediatric patients age 3 months and up for heart and liver transplants. Cellcept is used for the prevention of organ rejection (in combination with other immunosuppressants) by **organ transplant patients** and is also used off-label to treat lupus and other immune system-related diseases such as multiple sclerosis. (Cellcept [patient reviews](#))

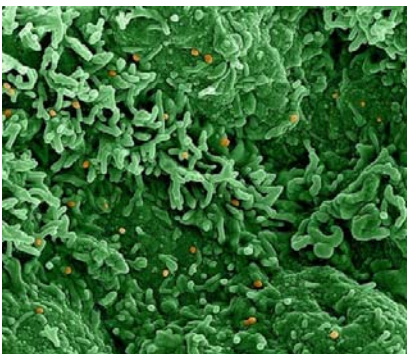
[FDA Label Update](#) June 6, 2022

- After receiving more than 24,000 public comments, including many from pharmacists, the five members of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) unanimously agreed to conduct an in-depth probe of **pharmacy benefit managers** (PBMs). These six PBMs will be required to turn over information to the FTC within 90 days: CVS Caremark; Express Scripts; OptumRx; Humana; Prime Therapeutics; and MedImpact Healthcare Systems. FTC member Alvaro Bedaya explained, "Nearly everyone is affected by PBM business practices. For most Americans, pharmacy middlemen control what medicine you get, how you get it, when you get it, and how much you pay for it. Yet PBM practices are cloaked in secrecy, opacity, and almost impenetrable complexity."

<https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/2022/06/08/drug-prices-heart-new-ftc-investigation-pharmacy-benefit-managers-pbms/10002565002/>

- With its latest venture into primary care clinics, is America's leading organization for seniors selling its trusted seal of approval? **AARP** is licensing out its name for exclusive use by a new chain of medical clinics called Oak Street Health. Kaiser Health News' Fred Schulte investigates AARP's potential conflicts of interest posed by its new and old **royalty arrangements**.

<https://khn.org/news/article/aarp-health-marketing-partnerships-medicare-medigap/>



Colorized electron micrograph of monkeypox virus (orange) on the surface of infected VERO E6 cells (green). VERO e6 is a laboratory cell culture lineage derived from African green monkey kidney cells.

Image credit: National Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases

Image source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/niaid/albums/72177720299215057>

- Counting cancerous **lymph nodes**, regardless of cancer type, could be a reliable outcome predictor for patients, according to a Cedars-Sinai Medical Center study. The researchers performed a retrospective analysis of nearly 3.3 million patients with 16 kinds of cancers from two patient databases. The study was published in *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2022/06/220603100123.htm>

2

Ask a Patient® Health News

- Ohio State University researchers studied the benefits of cannabis-related products for pain and found a lack of evidence for **long-term pain benefits**. However, they did find evidence of short-term benefit in treating neuropathic pain such as **diabetic neuropathy** (burning and tingling in extremities) for two FDA-approved synthetic products with 100% tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC: dronabinol (brand name **Marinol**) and nabilone (**Cesamet**). In addition, a sublingual spray containing half THC and half **cannabidiol** (CBD) also showed some clinical benefit for neuropathic pain, although that product is not available in the U.S. Both [Marinol](#) and [Cesamet](#) have high levels of satisfaction reported by patients at Ask a Patient.

<https://news.ohsu.edu/2022/06/06/cannabis-products-demonstrate-short-term-reduction-in-chronic-pain-little-else>

- In a small but remarkable study, 12 patients with **colorectal cancer** were treated with an immunotherapy drug called dostarlimab (Jemperli brand name), and all have gone into **remission** without the need for chemotherapy. The study was presented at the 2022 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Annual Meeting and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Jemperli maker GlaxoSmithkline partially funded the study.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/rectal-cancer-drug-trial-immunotherapy-dostarlimab-study/>

- When a 35-year old neurosurgery fellow at Johns Hopkins University Hospital began to crave strange smells and salty flavors, he knew from his medical training that the cravings could be a form of **pica**, an unusual urge to eat non-food items like clay or dirt, often triggered by an **iron deficiency**. It took more than a year to find and fix the root cause of his condition.

Surprisingly, a **drug** commonly taken for **GERD** (heartburn) was the culprit. This **case study** has an important take-away that may help patients avoid **unnecessary tests and procedures**. Check out **Ask a Patient's "Strange Symptoms."**

<https://www.askapatient.com/news/strange-symptoms-iron-deficiency-anemia.asp>



- Moderna says its **new vaccine candidate**, which fights both the original COVID-19 strain and the now-dominant **omicron variant**, shows a "superior neutralizing antibody response" with a **protection so strong** that it could potentially last a year. The company hopes to have the booster available in the U.S. by late summer.

<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/08/1103659340/moderna-vaccine-booster-omicron>

- In its first report, the 27-member scientific advisory group tasked by the World Health Organization with understanding **how the coronavirus pandemic began** said that **every hypothesis remains on the table**, including a possible laboratory incident. Available data suggests the virus originated in animals but gaps in "key pieces of data" meant a complete understanding of the pandemic's origins could not be established.

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/10/china/who-covid-pandemic-origins-report-intl-hnk/index.html>

- In our May 15 newsletter, we reported on the **Walgreens' Covid-19 dashboard** that reports results of Covid-19 infection lab-based **PCR testing** based on data from almost 7,000 Walgreens locations throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Surprisingly, their dashboard showed that **unvaccinated people had lower rates of positive test results** than most of the vaccinated groups (see chart below for May 5 - May 11, 2022).

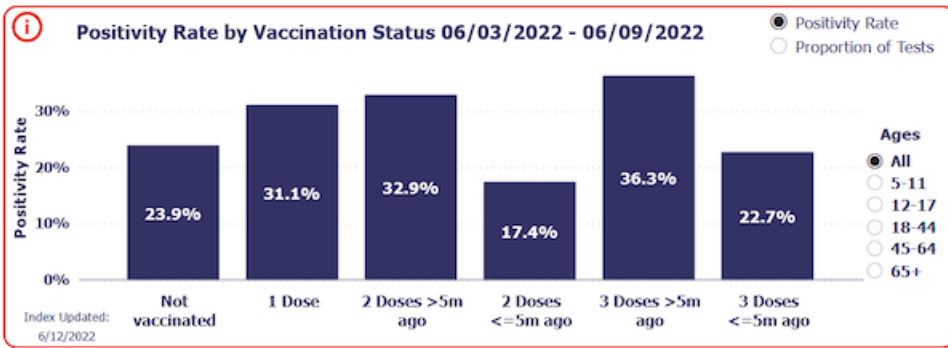
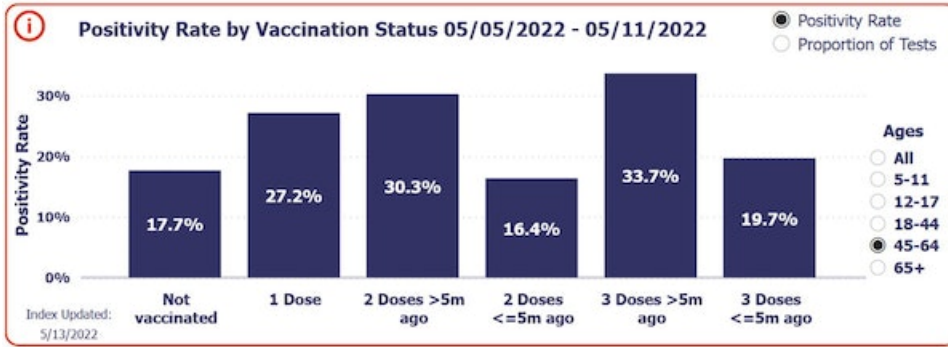
In response to questions raised by these counterintuitive results, **Aegis** and **Walgreens** published a white paper that offers more information about the characteristics of the groups taking the tests, including where they live, the reasons for taking the tests, the type of test, and the frequency of the testing. Notably, the unvaccinated group included many **healthy frequent**

2

<https://www.askapatient.com/news/newsletter-archive/>

Ask a Patient® Health News

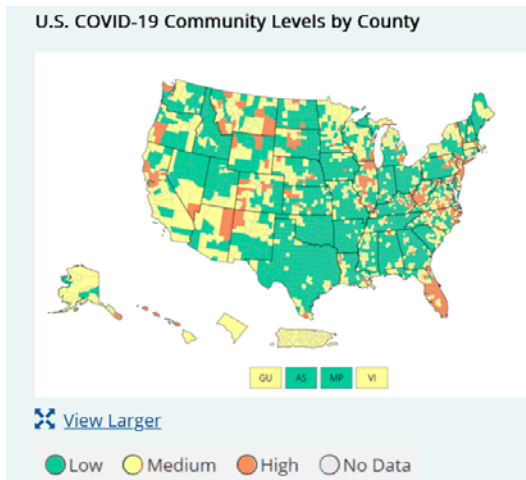
testers, who might have been testing once a week as a condition of their employment. More of the vaccinated group reported testing because they had **symptoms**, so therefore more likely to test **positive**.



**Covid Statistics**

As of June 9, 2022, about 90% of the U.S. population lived in communities with **low or medium** levels of transmission.

As of June 8, 2022, the 7-day moving average of daily new cases in the U.S. was 109,032, an 8 percent increase from the previous week's average of 100,916, due to the highly contagious Omicron variant. The areas in yellow in the map below are considered "medium" transmission while orange depicts an area of "high" transmission.



- The World Health Organization reports that **globally**, the number of new weekly cases has continued the **declining trend** observed since a peak in January 2022.

During the week of 30 May to 5 June 2022, over three million cases were reported, a 12% decrease as compared to the previous week. The number of new weekly deaths also continues to decline, with over 7,600 fatalities reported, representing a 22% decrease as compared to the previous week.

<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---8-june-2022>

- A YouGov global poll shows that fear of catching Covid varies among regions of the world and has changed over time. Countries in the Asia Pacific region have the greatest proportion of people either "very scared" or "somewhat scared" that they

4

Ask a Patient® Health News

will contract Covid-19. However, fear levels have declined across all countries between January 2022 and April 2022. People living in Europe tend to have the lowest levels of concern. This interactive map shows level of concern by global region.

<https://today.yougov.com/topics/international/articles-reports/2020/03/17/fear-catching-covid-19>

**Answer our quick poll:**

With Covid cases rising again, **how worried** are you that you will catch Covid-19 now?

Not worried

Slightly worried

Somewhat Worried

Very worried

[Vote Here](#)

Ask a Patient® Health Newsletter: June 12, 2022

Copyright, 2022

Visit us at [www.askapatient.com](http://www.askapatient.com)

Please contact us with questions, comments, and suggestions: [admin@askapatient.com](mailto:admin@askapatient.com)

[Unsubscribe](#)

or

[Subscribe](#)