

Ask a Patient Health News September 4 2022

Health News: September 4, 2022

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) database of **safety-related drug label changes** added these updates (among others) in August:

Antidepressant Effexor XR label was updated August 15 to include information supporting why it is not approved for pediatric patients, to include a new table of drug interactions, and to convert the label to the new "physician labeling rule" format that aims to make labels consistent and easier for doctors to understand. Effexor XR is made by Wyeth, a subsidiary of Pfizer.

Effexor XR [Label Change](#)

Hair loss pill Propecia label was changed on August 1 to add clinical trials results for sexual side effects and also to add the risk of suicidal ideation and behavior to its list of postmarketing-discovered side effects. Propecia is made by Organon, a recent spin-off of Merck.

Propecia [Label Change](#)

Vuity eye drops for presbyopia, or blurry close-range vision updated its label on August 16 to warn of the risk of night driving when using the drops as well as the risk of these eye disorders: vitreous detachment, vitreomacular traction, retinal tear, and retinal detachment. Vuity is made by Allergan, an AbbVie company.

Vuity [Label Change](#)

- As of Thursday, September 1, the CDC reports over **19,465** cases of **Monkeypox** in the U.S.; the daily number of cases is declining. Two weeks ago, the case count was 14,115.

Global case count: 52,090 cases (41,000 two weeks ago). Worldwide, the U.S. has the most cases, followed by Spain, Brazil, Germany, and the U.K.

Check these maps for case counts by state or country:

[U.S. Map](#) with case counts by state

[World Map](#) with case count by country

- If enacted into law by Congress, the "**Banning Misleading Drug Ads Act**" would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to finalize a 15-year old proposed rule making pharmaceutical **television ads** reveal risks and other medication information "in a clear, conspicuous, and neutral manner." This means that **images and sounds that distract from the risks and side effects messages** would no longer be allowed in television commercials. It also stipulates that if the FDA does not issue a final rule by 180 days after the date of enactment, the proposed rule would automatically become final.

<https://www.worstpills.org/newsletters/view/1487> (paywalled; abstract available)

- Matt Holman, head of the Food and Drug Administration's **tobacco science office**, left that position for a job at **Philip Morris** in July. On March 11, Holman signed a "modified risk order" from the FDA to Philip Morris authorizing the company to market its heated tobacco products using language saying that such a product "significantly reduces your body's exposure to harmful or potentially harmful chemicals." "There have been a lot of strange decisions coming out of that office," said tobacco industry critic Stanton Glantz, founding director of the **UCSF Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education**.

The Grid investigates the prevalence of the "**revolving door**" between the FDA and industries they police by analyzing **Linked-In** connections.

<https://www.grid.news/story/science/2022/08/03/an-fda-official-bolting-to-big-tobacco-shines-a-light-on-the-agencys-revolving-door-problem/>

2

Ask a Patient® Health News

- Dariush Mozaffarian, co-chair of a non-partisan national task force on food issues and cardiologist and dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University says that we are in a **nutrition crisis** in the U.S. Diet-related deaths outrank deaths from smoking, and about half of U.S. deaths from heart disease – nearly 900 deaths a day – are linked to poor diet. The pandemic highlighted the problem, with much worse outcomes for people with obesity and other diet-related diseases. The task force came up with **seven proposals** to help get people to eat healthier. Number one on the list: "**treat food as medicine**" by integrating food and nutrition into health care.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/08/31/1120004717/the-u-s-diet-is-deadly-here-are-7-ideas-to-get-americans-eating-healthier>

Health Podcasts and Live Stream Events in September

- A non-partisan White House conference on the topic of **nutrition, hunger, and health** will take place on Wednesday, September 28 and will be live streamed.

<https://health.gov/our-work/nutrition-physical-activity/white-house-conference-hunger-nutrition-and-health/conference-details>

- In [Aging Matters](#)' September 13 podcast, host Cheryl Beversdorf will explore the concept of **GeriAthletics** with Mike Studer, PT, DPT, MHS, Clinician and Physical Therapist. Over age 65 but never been athletically competitive or trained to be your physical best? It's not too late, with the right kind of training. Recordings will also available after the podcast at the same link.

Date: September 13, 2022

Time: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

<https://open.spotify.com/show/0HvZeXmoVAmtXmbQwBJVvM>

More from *Aging Matters*:

Age and Driving

Date: Tuesday, September 6, 2022

Time: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Guest: David Bernstein, MD, Geriatrician and Author (*Senior Driving Dilemmas: Lifesaving Strategies*)

<https://wera.fm/listen-live/>

Early Stage Dementia and Family/Caregiver Resources

Date: Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Time: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Guest: Lindsey Vajpeyi, Director of Early-stage Programs, Insight Memory Care Center

<https://open.spotify.com/show/0HvZeXmoVAmtXmbQwBJVvM>

- If you or someone you know has Type 1 Diabetes, check out this virtual summit sponsored by **T1International**, a pharmaceutical organization advocating for affordable access to insulin. The "**Insulin4All Summit**" is on Saturday, September 24, 2022 and features 19 speakers from around the globe.

<https://www.t1international.com/Summit2022/>

- In this recent PBS interview, Kaiser Health News' Julie Rovner shares her insights on how new **drug pricing legislation** might help patients spend less on some of their drugs.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-a-potential-senate-deal-could-lower-health-care-costs-for-millions-of-americans>

- When our eyes move during **REM sleep**, we're **gazing at things** in the dream world our brains have created, according to a new study by researchers at UC San Francisco. The findings shed light not only into how we dream, but also into how our imaginations work. The researchers were able to look at "head direction" cells in the brains of mice, who also experience REM

2

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

Ask a Patient® Health News

sleep. These cells act something like a compass, and their activity shows which direction the mouse perceives itself as heading. The study was published in *Science*.

<https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2022/08/423531/eye-movements-rem-sleep-mimic-gazes-dream-world>

- People who **resemble each other**, but are not directly related, have many **genetic similarities**, according to a small study by Josep Carreras of the Leukaemia Research Institute in Barcelona. He recruited 64 participants (32 pairs) from a Canadian photographer's [project](#) called "I'm not a Look-Alike." The volunteers agreed to do facial recognition analysis, DNA testing, and answer a survey. The results were published in *Cell Reports*.

<https://www.kmbc.com/article/you-have-a-doppelganger-share-dna-with-them-new-study-suggests/40995791>



Photographic examples of Look-alike pairs used in the study. Image Source: [Cell Reports](#)

- A recent study by the International Cholesterol Treatment Trialists' Collaboration (CTT) found that more than 90% of all reports of **muscle symptoms** by clinical trials participants using **statin therapy** were not actually due to the statin. The researchers found that just over 27% of people taking statins reported muscle symptoms. However, the same sort of symptoms were reported by 26.6% of the trial participants given a **placebo**. The study was published in *The Lancet*.

Some doctors, such as Dr. Steven Nissen of Cleveland Clinic and Dr. Robert Rosenson of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City have criticized the study. For example, they say the new analysis set a **high bar** for tying muscle symptoms to statin use, requiring that people both report **symptoms** and have **blood tests** revealing high levels of creatine kinase, an enzyme caused by muscle breakdown. "But most patients who develop adverse muscle symptoms don't have muscle breakdown," Rosenson said. "They have pain or they may have weakness. You're not actually addressing the vast majority of patients that suffer from statin muscle intolerance."

https://tulsaworld.com/lifestyles/health-med-fit/biggest-study-yet-finds-no-link-between-statins-muscle-aches/article_ac825e28-a80d-5116-81df-b6791c052570.html

Cholesterol Treatment Trialists' (CTT) Collaboration states that it uses data from individual trials that were funded by the pharmaceutical industry, but that the CTT Collaboration has not received grant funding from industry. This study discloses that some of the individual authors have received **funding from pharmaceutical industry**.

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)01545-8/fulltext?_hsmi=224048558](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01545-8/fulltext?_hsmi=224048558)

- Joe Graedon of **The People's Pharmacy** wasn't the only one with a **skeptical reaction** to the *Lancet* study with his blog post "Statin Side Effects Are All In Your Head! Really?" He points out that many of the trials analyzed for the study were "**drug approval**" studies, which have their own set of nuances that can **skew placebo side effects results**. Check out his assessment of the *Lancet* study, along with many reader comments.

<https://www.peoplespharmacy.com/articles/statin-side-effects-are-all-in-your-head-really>

- The **US Preventative Services Task Force** (USPSTF) updated its **guidance on use of statins**. They recommend that primary care doctors prescribe statins for the prevention of cardiovascular events (like heart attacks) and all-cause mortality in adults aged 40 to 75 years with no history of cardiovascular disease and who have 1 or more cardiovascular disease risk factors

4

Ask a Patient® Health News

(such as high cholesterol, diabetes, hypertension, or smoking) and an estimated 10-year heart attack risk of 10% or greater. The guidelines say there is "moderate certainty" that such patients will have "moderate benefit" from taking statins.

These recommendations are similar to those made in 2016, although the latest removes language about low-to-moderate dosing of statins in people with no history of cardiovascular disease. The guidance report was published in *JAMA*.

<https://www.tctmd.com/news/new-uspstf-statin-guidance-familiar-advice-some-holes-fill>

Cleveland Clinic's **health library** provides a description of types of statins along with explanations of how they help improve liver function, lower cholesterol and improve heart health. Common and rare side effects are listed.

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/treatments/22282-statins>



- As of Tuesday, August 31 (the most recent available data), the CDC reports that an additional 4.6% of communities were classified as having a "low" Community level compared with the previous week. 32% of all counties were considered "low," 26% were "high" and 42% of counties had "medium" Covid Community levels. **Check your city or county's Community level here:**

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/>

Long Covid Research

- Are you more likely to have long covid symptoms if you were infected with the earlier Covid variants, like **Delta** rather than **Omicron** (December 2021 and later)? Scientists have just begun to **compare variants head to head**, with varying results. Claire Steves, a professor of aging and health at King's College in London found patients have been 24% to 50% **less likely to develop long covid during the Omicron wave than during the Delta wave**.

A recent study analyzing a patient database from the Veterans Health Administration found that **reinfections** dramatically increased the risk of serious health issues, even in people with mild symptoms. Kaiser Health News investigates who is most likely to develop lingering or "long covid" symptoms.

<https://khn.org/news/article/long-covid-omicron-reinfections-vaccines/>

- The CDC says that the proportion of people who had Covid-19 that go on to experience **post-Covid (long term) conditions** can vary, with 13.3% still having symptoms at one month or longer after infection, and 2.5% having symptoms for three months or longer. Among patients who were **hospitalized**, more than **30% still had symptoms at 6 months**.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/long-term-effects/index.html>

- Please vote in our new **quick poll**, which asks readers to weigh in with their experience:

Have you experienced "long Covid" (lingering symptoms) from a Covid-19 illness?

No; I haven't caught Covid

No; had Covid after December 2021

No; had Covid before December 2021

Yes; had Covid after December 2021

Yes; had Covid before December 2021

Other; list below

Vote!



4

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

Ask a Patient® Health News

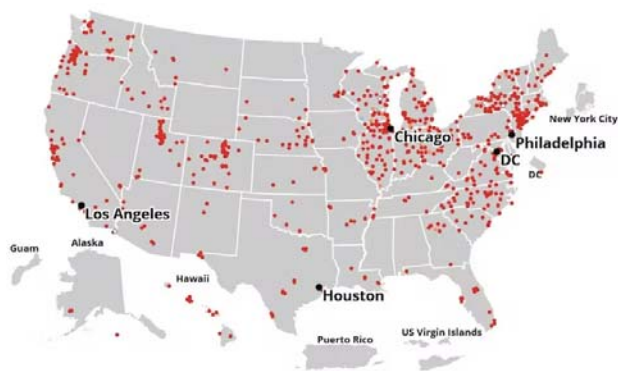


Results of our last poll: "How worried are you now that you will become infected with Covid-19 virus?"

As time went by during the polling period (mid-May through August 2022), an increasing number of people responded that they were "not worried" or only "slightly worried" about catching Covid. In the final results, **57% of respondents were either not worried or only slightly worried about catching covid, while 26% were somewhat worried and 17% were very worried.**

Final [results and comments](#)

- Most of the country is reporting high SARS-CoV-2 levels in wastewater according to CDC **wastewater surveillance** data. This chart shows the percent of samples at participating wastewater treatment plants with detectable SARS-CoV-2 in the last 15 days (Aug 16, 2022 – Aug 30, 2022). 790 out of 824 sites (in red) had 80 - 100% of samples test positive. Only 7 out of 824 sites (clear circles) had no samples with detectable virus.



Ask a Patient® Health Newsletter: September 4, 2022

Copyright, 2022

Visit us at www.askapatient.com

Please contact us with questions, comments, and suggestions: admin@askapatient.com

Coming soon: probiotics product categories comparison and news on over-the-counter non-tobacco nicotine replacement products (like gum, lozenges)

[Unsubscribe](#)

or

[Subscribe](#)

If you like this newsletter, please [forward](#) it to a family member, friend or colleague and tell them why they might like it too. Thank you!