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Inside C2

Southern DAILY

Make Today Different

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Thailand reports 3,095 new COVID-19 cases, total tally near 100,000

BANGKOK, May 15 (Xinhua) -- Thailand reported 3,095 new COVID-19 infections on Saturday, raising the total caseload to 99,145, as more cases were found in the country's prison system, official data showed.

The Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) said the new cases included 877 infected at prisons, 2,215 domestic transmissions outside the prison system and three imported cases.

The country reported 17 new fatalities, bringing the death toll to 565, CCSA spokesman Taweewin Visanuothin said at a daily news briefing.

Some 34,913 patients are under treatment in hospitals, with 1,234 in critical conditions, according to Taweewin.

As of Friday, Thailand has administered more than 2.2 million doses of vaccines against the coronavirus, according to the CCSA.

The country aims to inoculate 70 percent of its nearly 70 million population by the end of the year.



A staff member disinfects a community in Bangkok, Thailand, May 15, 2021. Thailand reported 3,095 new COVID-19 infections on Saturday, raising the total caseload to 99,145, as more cases were found in the country's prison system, official data showed. (Xinhua/Rachen Sageam-sak)

CDC data show racial, ethnic disparities in COVID-19 vaccination in U.S.

WASHINGTON, May 15 (Xinhua) -- Data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that there are significant racial and ethnic disparities in COVID-19 vaccination in the country.

Vaccination rates among Black, Hispanic and Asian people are lower than those for the number of White people, and "these groups represent a smaller share of people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 than their share of the U.S. population overall," CNN reported on Thursday.

Black people, accounting for 12.4 percent of the U.S. population, represent 8.5 percent of those fully vaccinated, and Hispanic people, making up 17 percent of the country's total population, make up 11 percent of those fully vaccinated.

The gap among Asian people is smaller, making up 5.3 percent of those fully vaccinated against 5.8 percent of the population, according to the CDC data.



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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

CORONAVIRUS DIARY 05/15/2021



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We Are Welcoming Ambassador Yansane To Come For A Visit



both countries.

We are so excited that this lunch meeting will give more attention to Africa and especially for Guinea.

President Conde of Guinea was just re-elected last year. He is planning to bring this West Africa country onto the world stage.

We also hope all the people who are interested in African investment will come and join us in near future.

The City of Houston is sponsoring African Day in order to promote the relationship with Africa on May 27th. Mayor Sylvester Turner has invited all of the African ambassadors from Washington to join in this great event. Along with them Ambassador Yansane of the Republic of Guinea will be included.

It is my great honor and responsibility to welcome our Ambassador to town. In the meantime, we are sponsoring an "Investing in Guinea" business lunch. We will invite many Texas area business leaders to come and meet the ambassador

The areas for discussion will include education, telecommunication, agriculture, TV, media and tourism, all of which topics are of benefit to

I have been appointed by the Government of Guinea as Honorary Consul in Houston



Southern DAILY Make Today Different

Editor's Choice



Soldiers work in a building damaged by a rocket launched from the Gaza Strip, in Ashdod, southern Israel, May 11, 2021. REUTERS/Avi Roccah



Smoke and flames rise from a tower building as it is destroyed by Israeli air strikes amid a flare-up of Israeli-Palestinian violence in Gaza City May 12, 2021. Israel launched its offensive after Hamas fired rockets at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in retaliation for Israeli police clashes with Palestinians near al-Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem during Ramadan. REUTERS/Ibraheem Abu Mustafa



Grace Peterson, 14, is inoculated with Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine after Georgia authorized the vaccine for ages over 12 years, at Dekalb Pediatric Center in Decatur, Georgia, May 11, 2021. U.S. states are set to begin using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to inoculate young adolescents against COVID-19 after advisers to the CDC backed the plan in a unanimous vote.



Laser beams are shot through the air as demonstrators hurl rocks during a protest demanding government action to tackle poverty, police violence and inequalities in healthcare and education systems in Bogota, Colombia, May 10, 2021. REUTERS/Luisa Gonzalez



A woman prays next to the carcasses of elephants that according to the forest officials possibly died because of a lightning strike, on the foothills of the Kundoli reserve forest area in Nagaon district in the north-eastern state of Assam, India. REUTERS/Anuwar Hazarika



Ruqia Bakhshi, 14, one of the students who was injured in a car bomb blast outside a school, receives treatment at a hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan May 10, 2021. At least 80 people were killed in the massive bomb blast as girls left school in the minority Hazara neighborhood that has repeatedly been targeted by militants. REUTERS/Stringer

CDC: Vaccinated People OK To Take Masks Off Indoors And Outdoors



The CDC has updated their guidance for people who have been vaccinated against Covid-19 who now can go without masks indoors and outdoors.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 can safely resume life without any restrictions, according to long-awaited federal guidance released Thursday.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), if you are fully vaccinated — two weeks past the last required COVID-19 vaccine dose — you don't need to wear masks indoors or outside, and you don't need to maintain physical distance.

"The science is clear: if you are fully vaccinated, you are protected, and you can start doing the things that you stopped doing because of the pandemic," CDC said.

Essentially, for vaccinated people, life can begin to return to normal.

The new guidelines do not apply to health care settings, correctional facilities or homeless shelters, the agency said. The CDC said fully vaccinated people should still wear well-fitted masks where required by laws, rules and regulations, including on airplanes, trains and public

transportation.

The CDC says fully vaccinated individuals can:



The update comes as the agency has been criticized for being too slow to react to changing science, overly cautious, and even contradictory in its recommendations to the public.

States across the country have been easing restrictions and reopening businesses as local vaccination rates increase, despite the CDC and federal health officials who continued to urge caution.

Health experts said they feared the agency's overly conservative approach could result in fewer people getting shots, if they failed to show the benefits of being vaccinated.

The agency relaxed some of its rules for fully vaccinated people last month, but still advised wearing masks indoors in most public

settings, and in many outdoors places. That guidance included an elaborate color-coded chart for various activities that was widely mocked for being confusing and contradictory.

The agency's recent guidance on summer camps was also panned as being overly restrictive.

The CDC said masks should be worn at all times, even outdoors, by everyone, including vaccinated adults and children as young as 2 years old.

The CDC denied that the changes were being made because of the criticism, and insisted the agency was following the science.

Additional data in the past few weeks has shown the effectiveness of the vaccines in the real world, the vaccines work against variants, and vaccinated people are unlikely to transmit the virus.



But as recently as Wednesday evening, the message hadn't changed. CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said during an interview with CNBC's Shepard Smith that masks were still advised for people indoors, even if they were fully vaccinated, because the science wasn't clear if the vaccine worked against COVID-19 variants, or whether vaccinated people were asymptomatic carriers. (Courtesy thehill.com)

Related

Updated CDC Guidance Says People Vaccinated Against Covid-19 Can Go Without Masks Indoors And Outdoors

(CNN) People fully vaccinated against Covid-19 do not need to wear masks or practice social distancing indoors or outdoors, except under certain circumstances, the director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Thursday.

"If you are fully vaccinated, you can start doing the things that you had stopped

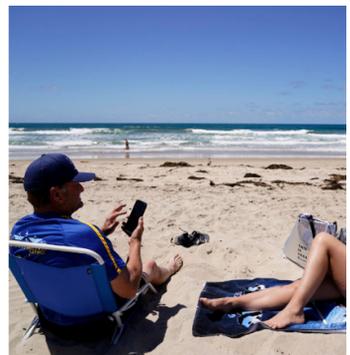
doing because of the pandemic," Dr. Rochelle Walensky said during a White House Covid-19 briefing. "We have all longed for this moment when we can get back to some sense of normalcy."



Walensky said the science supports the new recommendation that "anyone who is fully vaccinated can participate in indoor and outdoor activities -- large or small -- without wearing a mask or physical distancing." She cited three studies -- one from Israel and one from the United States -- that show vaccines work.

The Israeli study, which was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, showed the vaccine was 97% effective against symptomatic Covid-19 and 86% effective against asymptomatic infection in over 5,000 health care workers.

There have been reports of "breakthrough" infections among vaccinated people in the United States -- a small number among more than 117 million people in the United States who are now fully vaccinated. Walensky noted that "the resulting infection is more likely to have a lower viral load, may be shorter in duration, and likely less risk of transmission to others."



Walensky's announcement has a few ca-

utions. She warned that people who are immune compromised should speak with their doctors before giving up their masks. She also said that "the past year has shown us that this virus can be unpredictable, so if things get worse, there is always a chance we may need to make a change to these recommendations." (Courtesy cnn.com)



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Hospitals Are Seeing More Young Adults With Severe Covid Symptoms, CDC Says



Key Points

CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said hospitals are seeing more and more younger adults with severe Covid-19.

"Data suggests this is all happening as we are seeing increasing prevalence of variants, with 52 jurisdictions now reporting cases of variants of concern," Walensky said.

The B.1.1.7 variant has since spread and now accounts for more than 16,000 cases across 52 jurisdictions in the country.

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

Hospitals are seeing more and more younger adults in their 30s and 40s admitted with severe cases of Covid-19, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Wednesday.

"Data suggests this is all happening as we are seeing increasing prevalence of variants, with 52 jurisdictions now reporting cases of variants of concern," Walensky said at a press briefing on the pandemic.

Scientists say new variants of the coronavirus are more transmittable and some of them may be more lethal as well, resulting in more severe cases. The highly contagious B.1.1.7 variant from the United Kingdom has become the dominant strain circulating in the United States, Walensky said.



Walensky previously warned that traveling for spring break could lead to another rise in cases, especially in Florida where the variant was rapidly spreading.

"I'm pleading with you, for the sake of our nation's health," Walensky said at a briefing last month. "Cases climbed last spring, they climbed again in the summer, they will climb now if we

stop taking precautions when we continue to get more and more people vaccinated."

The B.1.1.7 variant has since spread and now accounts for more than 16,000 cases across 52 jurisdictions in the country. The variant is about 50% more transmissible than the original wild strain of the coronavirus. (Courtesy cnbc.com)

Related

States and Cities Look to Schools, Camps, Even Beaches To Vaccinate Younger Teens



Covid shots being administered by a health program in Denver that works with schools to vaccinate older teenagers — and soon, younger ones — at health clinics it runs in six public schools. (Photo/Kevin Mohatt for The New York Times)

Key Point

The F.D.A.'s authorization of Pfizer's Covid shot for 12- to 15-year-olds is a milestone in battling the coronavirus, but actually getting them vaccinated involves new challenges.

The race is on to vaccinate the nation's nearly 17 million 12- to 15-year-olds against Covid-19. The Food and Drug Administration's decision on Monday to authorize the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for younger adolescents presents a new opportunity in the push for broad immunity against the coronavirus in the United States. But the challenges of getting them vaccinated are more complicated than for adults and older teenagers.

"The game changes when you go down as young as 12 years old," said Nathan Quesnel, the superintendent of schools in East Hartford, Conn., adding, "You need to have a different level of sensitivity."

A recent survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation's Vaccine Monitor found that many parents — even some who eagerly got their own Covid shots — are reluctant to vaccinate pubescent children. Yet doing so will be critical for further reducing transmission of the virus, smoothly reopening middle and high schools and regaining some sense of national normalcy. Vaccination for the age group is expected to begin across the

country later this week. Sites are anticipating an initial surge in demand before an inevitable softening, much as happened with adults.



A vial of the Pfizer vaccine at the Denver School of Science and Technology Green Valley Ranch this month. (Photo/Kevin Mohatt for The New York Times)

Sites are anticipating an initial surge in demand before an inevitable softening, much as happened with adults.

States, counties and school districts around the country are trying to figure out the most reassuring and expedient ways to reach younger adolescents as well as their parents, whose consent is usually required by state law. They are making plans to offer vaccines not only in schools, but also at pediatricians' offices, day camps, parks and even beaches.

Children's Minnesota, a Minneapolis-based hospital system where the main Covid vaccination site has offered stress balls, colored lights and images of playful dolphins projected on the ceiling, is planning to provide shots beginning later this week in at least a dozen middle schools and a Y.W.C.A.



In Columbus, Ohio, public health nurses will drive a mobile vaccination unit around neighborhoods "just like you would an ice cream truck," said Dr. Mysheika Roberts, the city health commissioner. In Connecticut, Community Health Center, a statewide primary care provider that vaccinated the busloads of high school seniors, is aiming to reach younger adolescents by offering shots at amusement parks, beaches and camps, among other locales.

"You're going to Dollar General?" said Yvette Highsmith-Francis, a vice president of Community Health Center. "Guess what? We're in the

parking lot." But with the school year ending soon, many health officials are racing against the academic clock to schedule both recommended doses, seeing schools as the best place to reach many students at once.

"We have a very finite amount of time," said Dr. Anne Zink, the chief medical officer for Alaska. "In Alaska, kids go to the wind as soon as summer hits, so our opportunity to get them is now."

A number of places are revving up vaccination efforts in schools. In Colorado, Denver Health will expand clinics it operates in six public schools to middle school students. For the last few weeks, it has provided 150 to 400 vaccines every Saturday and Sunday, reaching not just high school juniors and seniors but sometimes their parents and older siblings, too.

"It's been really successful because we are doing it in their communities, where the kids are familiar," said Dr. Sonja O'Leary, the medical director for Denver Health's school-based health centers.



Other states believe pediatricians' and family doctors' offices will be the best places to catch teenagers — and children as young as infants as companies plan eventually to seek authorization for the shots to be given to the youngest children. Until recently, few doctors had vaccines on hand for patients. But in recent weeks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has made a major push to enroll pediatricians to give the shots.

The thinking is that pediatricians are in the best position to field questions from parents and children. Not only are they experienced in giving routine childhood vaccinations, but they are also often a household's most trusted source of health information.

President Biden announced plans last week to ship doses of the Pfizer vaccine directly to pediatricians' offices, and he said that about 20,000 pharmacy sites were also ready to administer the vaccine to younger adolescents. (Courtesy nytimes.com)