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Mr. Lee's Commentary and Dairy



Inside C2

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Vaccines may be ready for Christmas as U.S. braces for post-Thanksgiving virus



FILE PHOTO: U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar speaks during a news conference about the latest coronavirus disease (COVID-19) developments, in the Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House in Washington,

WASHINGTON/LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - After a Thanksgiving weekend when the number of people traveling through U.S. airports reached its highest since mid-March, a top government official said on Monday some Americans could begin receiving coronavirus vaccinations before Christmas.

U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar said Pfizer Inc's COVID-19 vaccine could be authorized and shipped within days of a Dec. 10 meeting of outside advisers to the Food and Drug Administration tasked with reviewing trial data and recommending whether it warrants approval.

A vaccine from Moderna Inc could follow a week later, he said, after the company announced on Monday it would apply for U.S. and European emergency authorization. Final trial data showed the vaccine to be 94.1% effective at preventing COVID-19, comparable with Pfizer's results.

"So we could be seeing both of these vaccines out and getting into people's arms before Christmas," Azar said on CBS' "This Morning."

The federal government will ship the vaccines. State governors will decide how they are distributed within their states.

The United States has reported 4.2 million new COVID-19 cases so far in November and more than 36,000 coronavirus-related deaths, according to a Reuters tally. Hospi-

talizations are at a pandemic high and deaths the most in six months.

HOSPITALS AT BREAKING POINT

As the virus rages across the country, overwhelming hospital systems and pushing already exhausted medical staff near a breaking point, the governor of California warned that intensive care units in the state's hospitals were on track to exceed statewide capacity by mid-December.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, Governor Gavin Newsom said he may impose tougher coronavirus restrictions over the next two days, including a possible stay-at-home order.

Nearly 93,000 Americans are currently hospitalized with COVID-19, up 11% from last week and double the number reported a month ago, according to a Reuters analysis of state and county public health reports.

Experts worry that number will keep rising as the weather gets colder and people gather indoors more often. Increases in hospitalizations tend to lag spikes in new cases by a few weeks.

"Hospital capacity is the top concern," New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said on Monday. He ordered all elective surgeries to cease in one county and urged hospitals state-wide to again ready their plans to increase capacity by 50% if necessary or set up and staff field hospitals.

In the absence of a federal blueprint to curb the spread of the virus, more than 20 U.S. states have issued new or revamped restrictions on businesses and social life.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy said he was re-tightening the limit on outdoor gatherings to 25 people, effective Dec. 7, with exceptions for funerals, memorials and weddings. Religious and political activities, such as protests, are also exempt.

Murphy, who has brought back a series of COVID-19 restrictions in recent weeks, also said all indoor youth and adult sports will be put on hold from Dec. 5 through Jan. 2, 2021, also with exemptions.

"As you start to make your holiday plans, please recognize that the gathering limits are back to what they were in May and June – when we all came together and crushed the curve as much as any state in the nation," he wrote on Twitter. "Keep gatherings as small as possible."

U.S. officials pleaded with Americans ahead of the long Thanksgiving weekend to avoid holiday travel and limit social gatherings. But many appear to have disregarded those pleas as the Transportation Security Administration screened 1.18 million airline passengers on Sunday, the highest since mid-March.

That is still about 60% lower than the comparable day last year, when 2.88 million passengers were screened, the highest ever recorded by the agency.



星期二

2020年12月1日

WEALEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

11/30/2020

CORONAVIRUS DIARY Wealee@scdaily.com

We Return To The World **Economic Stage**

President-elect Joe Biden is expected to name Janet Yellen as Treasury Secretary to oversee the national economic and national security agendas.

In her role, she will face the challenge of re-engaging with American allies that have been put off by President Trump' s "America First" economic policies and his use of tariffs. She will also face the government's borrowing spree which is financed by issuing Treasury securities and has now pushed the U.S. budget deficit to levels not seen since World War II.

Ms. Yellen also criticized Trump's focus on bilateral trade deficits. She described tariffs on China as a tax on American consumers and warned that his trade war with China posed a risk of a recession.

Yellen has also expressed concerns about whether the U.S. is in a retreat from the role of international leadership under Trump.

We are very happy that the new Secretary of the Treasury understands that globalization and trade liberalization raises growth and lowers poverty around the world.

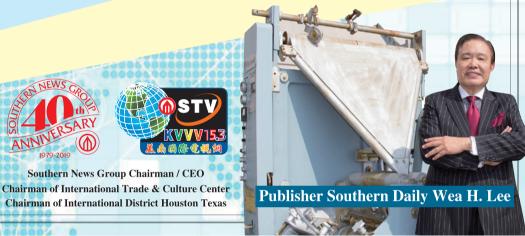
So many troublesome situations are facing our society today. We all hope



that the new Biden administration will follow the international norms and

systems because we really need the peace and prosperity now.





Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

Immunity To Coronavirus May Last Years, New Data Reveals



A patient recovering from SARS in China in 2003. Survivors of that infection, also caused by a coronavirus, still carried immune cells 17 years later. (Photo/ Agence France-Presse — Getty Images)

KEY POINT

How long might immunity to the coronavirus last? Years, maybe even decades, according to a new study - the most hopeful answer yet to a question that has shadowed plans for widespread vaccination.

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

Eight months after infection, most people who have recovered still have enough immune cells to fend off the virus and prevent illness, the new data show. A slow rate of decline in the short term suggests, happily, that these cells may persist in the body for a very, very long time to come. The research, published online, has not been peer-reviewed nor published in a scientific journal. But it is the most comprehensive and long-ranging study of immune memory to the coronavirus to date.

"That amount of memory would likely prevent the vast majority of people from getting hospitalized disease, severe disease, for many years," said Shane Crotty, a virologist at the La Jolla Institute of Immunology who co-led the new study.

The findings are likely to come as a relief to experts worried that immunity to the virus might be short-lived, and that vaccines might have to be administered repeatedly to keep the pandemic under control. And

the research squares with another recent finding: that survivors of SARS, caused by another coronavirus, still carry certain important immune cells 17 years after recovering.



Blood was drawn for a Covid-19 antibody test at the University of Arizona in Tucson earlier this year. (Photo/ **Cheney Orr/Reuters**)

The findings are consistent with encouraging evidence emerging from other labs. Researchers at the University of Washington, led by the immunologist Marion Pepper, had earlier shown that certain "memory" cells that were produced following infection with the coro-

in the body. A study published last week also found that people who have recovered from Covid-19 have powerful and protective killer immune cells even when antibodies are not detectable.

These studies "are all by and large painting the same picture, which is that once you get past those first few critical weeks, the rest of the response looks pretty conventional," said Deepta Bhattacharya, an immunologist at the University of Arizo-

Akiko Iwasaki, an immunologist at Yale University, said she was not surprised that the body mounts a long-lasting response because "that's what is supposed to happen." Still, she was heartened by the research: "This is exciting news."

A small number of infected people in the new study did not have long-lasting immunity after recovery, perhaps because of differences in the amounts of coronavirus they were exposed to. But vaccines can overcome that individual variability, said Jennifer Gommerman, an immunologist at the University of Toronto.



"That will help in focusing the response, so you don't get the same kind of heterogeneity that you would see in an infected population," she said.

In recent months, reports of waning antibody levels have created worry that immunity to the coronavirus may disappear in a few months, leaving people vulnerable to the virus again. But many immunologists have noted that it is natural for antibody levels to drop. Besides, antibodies are just one arm of the immune system. Although antibodies in the blood are needed to block the virus and forestall a second infection — a condition known as sterilizing immunity — immune cells that "remember" the virus more often are responsible for preventing serious illness. "Sterilizing immunity doesn't happen Alessandro Sette, an immunologist at the La Jolla Institute of Immunology and co-leader of the study. More often, people become infected a second time with a particular pathogen, and the immune system recognizes the invader and quickly extinguishes the infection. The coronavirus in particular is slow to do harm, giving the immune system plenty of time to kick into

"It may be terminated fast enough that not only are you not experiencing any symptoms but you are not infectious," Dr. Sette



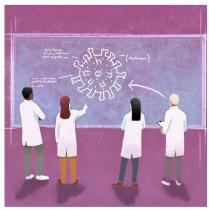
Dr. Sette and his colleagues recruited 185 men and women, aged 19 to 81, who had recovered from Covid-19. The majority had mild symptoms not requiring hospitalization; most provided just one blood sample, but 38 provided multiple samples over many months. The team tracked four components of the immune system: antibodies, B cells that make more antibodies as needed; and two types of T cells that kill other infected cells. The idea was to build a picture of the immune response over time by looking at its constituents.

"If you just look at only one, you can really be missing the full picture," Dr. Crotty

He and his colleagues found that antibodies were durable, with modest declines at six to eight months after infection, although there was a 200-fold difference in the levels among the participants. T cells showed only a slight, slow decay in the body, while B cells grew in number — an unexpected finding the researchers can't quite explain.

The study is the first to chart the immune response to a virus in such granular detail, experts said. "For sure, we have no priors here," Dr. Gommerman said. "We're learning, I think for the first time, about some of the dynamics of these populations through time." Worries over how long imsparked mainly by research into those viruses causing common colds. One frequently cited study, led by Jeffrey Shaman of Columbia University, suggested that immunity might fade quickly and that re-

infections could occur within a year. "What we need to be very mindful of is whether or not reinfection is going to be a concern," Dr. Shaman said. "And so seeing evidence that we have this kind of persistent, robust response, at least to these time scales, is very encouraging." So far, at least, he noted, reinfections with the coronavirus seem to be rare.



Exactly how long immunity lasts is hard to predict, because scientists don't yet know what levels of various immune cells are needed to protect from the virus. But studies so far have suggested that even small numbers of antibodies or T and B cells may be enough to shield those who have recovered. The participants in the study have been making those cells in robust amounts — so far. "There's no sign that memory cells are suddenly going to plummet, which would be kind of unusual," Dr. Iwasaki said. "Usually, there's a slow decay over years."

There is some emerging evidence that reinfections with common cold coronaviruses are a result of viral genetic variations, Dr. Bhattacharya noted, and so those concerns may not be relevant to the new coronavirus.

"I don't think it's an unreasonable prediction to think that these immune memory components would last for years," he said. (Courtesy ttps://www.msn.com)

Tuesday,December 1 2020



Editor's Choice



Members of Iranian forces carry the coffin of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh during a funeral ceremony in Tehran, Iran. Iranian Defense Ministry/ WANA



Protesters hold mirrors in front of riot police officers during a pro-democracy rally demanding the prime minister to resign and reforms on the monarchy, at 11th Infantry Regiment, in Bangkok, Thailand. REUTERS/Soe Zeya Tun



A female Coeligena helianthea hummingbird flies up to the flower in in The Paramuno corridor on Monserrate hill in Bogota, Colombia. REUTERS/Luisa Gonzalez



The East Room is adorned with holiday decorations at the White House in Washington. REU-TERS/Kevin Lamarque



Mike Tyson fights Roy Jones, Jr. (white trunks) during a heavyweight exhibition boxing bout for the WBC Frontline Belt at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Joe Scarnici/via



Cars burn during a demonstration against the "Global Security Bill" that rights groups say would make it a crime to circulate an image of a police officer's face and would infringe journalists' freedom in France, in Paris. REUTERS/Benoit Tessier



A Kashmiri woman walks past bundles of twigs that are used to make "Kangris", traditional fire pots made of clay and twigs in which hot charcoal is kept, at a field in Shallabugh village in Ganderbal district. REUTERS/Sanna Irshad Mattoo



Ethiopian refugees are seen at the Um Rakuba refugee camp which houses refugees fleeing the fighting in the Tigray region, on the Sudan-Ethiopia border, in Sudan. REUTERS/Baz Ratner



COMMUNITY

Texas Among States Chosen To Test Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution



KEY POINT

Pfizer picked Texas to test because of its diversity, population size and the ability to reach people in both cities and rural areas

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

Within a matter of days, Pfizer says it will ask the FDA to grant emergency use authorization for its COVID-19 vaccine. An advisory committee of outside experts will review data and hold public meetings to make a recommendation. Texas, Rhode Island, Tennessee and New Mexico were selected to be a part of the pilot program to test distribution of the company's COVID-19 vaccine, according to Pfizer's statements. CNN has reported the FDA is scheduling those meetings for the second week of December. Approval could quickly follow.

The Texas Department of State Health Services says more than 3,000 providers have signed up to receive and administer COVID vaccines — 725 of them are in North Texas. They include doctors' offices, pharmacies, hospitals, health, nursing homes, and other medical providers.

"It's not going to be bang everybody gets it in two weeks or even two months, so it's going to be a gradual process," said Chris Van Deusen, a DSHS spokesperson for

The U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention will decide how many doses of a vaccine go to Texas. DSHS Commissioner John Hellerstedt, with input from a committee of experts, will decide where in Texas they go and for

"At first, it's going to be places like hospitals, so they can vaccinate their staff," said Van Deusen.

High risk populations, like those over the age of 65 and people with pre-existing conditions, will be prioritized. Eventually, the vaccine should be available to the general public at no cost through their local doctor's office or pharmacy.

When the vaccine is ready, there will be a massive roll out, and Pfizer has to figure out how it gets delivered and distributed. Pfizer picked Texas to test because of our diversity, population size and the ability to reach people in both cities and rural areas.



Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top-infectious disease expert. said the results suggesting 90% effectiveness are "just extraordinary," adding: "Not very many people expected it would be as high as that."

This doesn't mean Texas will get the vaccine before other states, we were just chosen for distribution testing. Moderna announced Monday that its vaccine appears 94.5% effective. It's more expensive than Pfizer's vaccine, but it can be stored at regular refrigeration temperatures. Pfizer's vaccine must be stored at 94 degrees below zero, which could complicate mass distribution.

People in the Houston area are participating in the Moderna trials happening through Baylor College of Medicine. It's a double blind study, so doctors and patients both don't know who's getting the vaccine and who's getting the placebo. Moderna said Monday its COVID-19

moderna

vaccine is proving highly effective in a major trial, a second ray of hope in the global race for a shot to tame COVID-19. I do think I got the vaccine, only because after I got the second one, I had a really bad reaction to it for like a day," Moderna trial participant Lila Amaro said. "So that kind of makes me hopeful for the future. You know, if it is something that's working.'

Amaro clarified that her reaction to the vaccine left her feeling like she had the flu for about a day, but she says she'd do it again in a heartbeat if she had the

The U.S. Government says its on track to have more than 40 million COVID-19 vaccine doses for the public by the end of the year. (Courtesy / abc13.com)

Related

Gov. Abbott's Plan To Distribute **COVID-19 Vaccine, Medicine**

AUSTIN, Texas (KTRK) -- Gov. Greg Abbott announced this week that Texas is prepared to distribute medicines and vaccines that are now becoming available to treat COVID-19.

Abbott said Tuesday was the first day of what will be many announcements about the availability of medicines and vaccines to fight COVID-19. On Monday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized the immediate use of the first medical treatment developed for people who contract COVID-19.

An antibody drug by Eli Lilly & Co., called bamlanivimab, has been shown to improve the symptoms of people who contract the virus and prevent hospitalizations.



Governor of Texas, Greg Abbott.

The FDA said the drug is authorized for patients at high risk of progressing to severe COVID-19, including people 65 and older, or who have certain pre-existing medical conditions. Lilly is expected to immediately ship approximately 80,000 doses across the country, including Texas, at no cost to the states. Lilly should have up to 1 million doses by the end of the year.

Similar to the Lilly antibody treatment, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. also has requested FDA emergency use authorization of its own COVID-19 antibody medical treatment to treat patients before they become seriously ill and aid in reducing hospitalizations, with an announcement of the FDA's decision expected soon. This is the same antibody drug that President Donald Trump took

to quickly recover from COVID-19 last month.

The federal government has agreed to buy hundreds of thousands of doses of the two new treatment drugs, and will be in charge of allocating supplies to the states, which will in turn determine distribution to hospitals and healthcare facilities.

These medical treatments are in addition to the announcement Tuesday by Pfizer that its COVID-19 vaccine candidate achieved incredible success in an early analysis - demonstrating over 90% efficacy in preventing COVID-19. It is expected to become available as soon as late November.



Abbott said the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) has already developed a vaccine distribution plan and is working with health care providers to enroll in their immunization program to be eligible to administer these vaccines once available. Over 2,500 providers have already enrolled in the program.

"Swift distribution of vaccines and medical treatments will begin to heal those suffering from COVID-19, slow the spread of the virus, and aid in reducing hospitalizations of Texans," said Governor Abbott. "As we anticipate the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, the State of Texas is prepared to quickly distribute those medicines to Texans who voluntarily choose to use them." (Courtesy https://abc13.com/)



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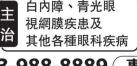
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