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Scientists See Signs of Lasting Virus Immunity, Even After Mild Infections

31-39 minutes

School districts across the U.S. are weighing the possibility of outdoor classes. New Zealand postponed its election amid a growing outbreak.

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Image





Credit...Farooq Khan/EPA, via Shutterstock

Even mild Covid-19 cases confer ‘durable immunity,’ new studies find.

Scientists who have been monitoring immune responses to the coronavirus for months are now starting to see encouraging signs of strong, lasting immunity, even in people who [developed only mild symptoms of Covid-19](#), a [flurry](#) of [new studies has found](#).

Disease-fighting antibodies, as well as immune cells called B cells and [T cells](#) capable of recognizing the virus, appear to persist months after infections have resolved — an encouraging echo of the body’s robust immune response to other viruses.

“This is exactly what you would hope for,” said Marion Pepper, an immunologist at the University of Washington and an author on [one of the new studies](#), which is currently under review at the journal Nature. “All the pieces are there to have a totally protective immune response.”

“This is very promising,” said Smita Iyer, an immunologist at the University of California, Davis, who is studying [immune responses to the coronavirus in rhesus macaques](#) and was not involved in these papers. “This calls for some optimism about herd immunity, and potentially a vaccine.”

Research on the coronavirus is proceeding so quickly, and in such volume, that the traditional review process often cannot keep pace. For the studies discussed here — as with un-peer-reviewed studies in general — The Times arranged for several experts to read and evaluate them.

Although researchers cannot forecast how long these immune responses will last, many experts consider the data a welcome indication that the body has a good chance of fending off the coronavirus if exposed to it again.

“Things are really working as they’re supposed to,” said Deepta Bhattacharya, an immunologist at the University of Arizona and an author on [one of the new studies](#), which has not yet been peer reviewed.

Protection against reinfection cannot be fully confirmed until there is proof that most people who encounter the virus a second time are actually able to keep it at bay, Dr. Pepper said. But the findings could help quell recent concerns over the virus’s ability to dupe the immune system into amnesia, leaving people vulnerable to repeat bouts of disease.

Fearing a ‘twindemic,’ health experts push urgently for flu shots.



Image



Credit...Joshua Bright for The New York Times

As public health officials look to fall and winter, the specter of a new surge of Covid-19 gives them chills. But there is a scenario they dread even more: a severe flu season resulting in a “twindemic.”

Even a mild flu season could stagger hospitals already coping

with Covid-19 cases. And although officials don't know yet what [degree of severity](#) to anticipate this year, they worry that large numbers of people could forgo flu shots, increasing the risk of widespread outbreaks.

Flu, a life-threatening respiratory illness that crowds emergency rooms and intensive care units, shares symptoms with Covid-19: fever, headache, cough, sore throat, muscle aches and fatigue. Flu could leave patients vulnerable to a harsher attack of Covid-19, doctors believe, and that coming down with both viruses at once could be disastrous.

The concern about a twindemic is so great that officials around the world are pushing the flu shot even before it becomes available in clinics and doctors' offices. Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has been talking it up, [urging corporate leaders to figure out ways to inoculate](#) employees. [The C.D.C. usually purchases 500,000 doses for uninsured adults](#) but this year ordered an additional 9.3 million doses.

Because common places of access, including offices and school health clinics, will be largely off limits, pharmacies and supermarkets are expected to play greater roles in administering the shots. As of this week, CVS and Walgreens will have doses ready.

The flu vaccine is rarely mandated in the U.S. except by [some health care facilities and nursery schools](#), but this month the statewide University of California system announced that because of the pandemic, [it is requiring](#) all 230,000 employees and 280,000 [students to get the flu vaccine](#) by November 1.

Fighting flu proactively during the continuing pandemic presents significant challenges: not only how to administer the shot safely

and readily, but also how to prompt people to get a shot that a majority of Americans have typically distrusted, dismissed and skipped.

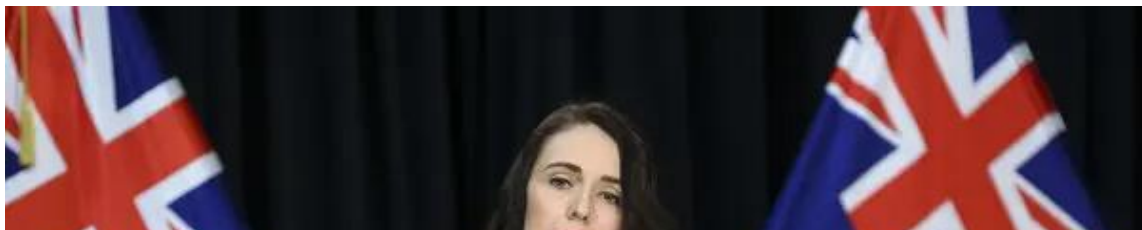
Public campaigns will describe the shot as a critical weapon during the pandemic. “Hopefully people will say, ‘There’s no Covid vaccine so I can’t control that, but I do have access to the flu vaccine and I can get that,’” said Patsy Stinchfield, senior director of infection prevention at Children’s Minnesota and a member of the C.D.C.’s influenza work group. “It gives you a little power to protect yourself.”

GLOBAL ROUNDUP

A cluster of cases prompts New Zealand to delay its election.



Image





Credit...Hagen Hopkins/Getty Images

New Zealand on Monday said it would postpone its national election by four weeks as a cluster of new virus cases continues to spread in Auckland, its largest city.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who has the sole authority to determine when people cast ballots, said she had consulted with all the major parties before deciding to move the election from Sept. 19. to Oct. 17. The latest possible date she could have chosen was Nov. 21.

Ms. Ardern called the new date a compromise that “provides sufficient time for parties to plan around the range of circumstances we could be campaigning under, for the electoral commission to prepare, and for voters to feel assured of a safe, accessible and critical election.”

But she ruled out further change. Even if the outbreak worsens, she said, “we will be sticking with the date we have.”

The election delay came as the mysterious cluster of new cases grew to 58 on Monday.

Health officials are still scrambling to test thousands of workers at airports and other points of entry, along with quarantine facilities and a [frozen food warehouse](#), as they try to determine

how the [virus re-emerged last week](#) after 102 days without known community transmission in the country.

Pressure on Ms. Ardern and her Labour Party to change the date had been building for several days.

With a Level 3 lockdown in Auckland putting a stop to campaigning, the leaders of other major parties argued that a free and fair election was impossible on the original date.

Winston Peters, the deputy prime minister and leader of the New Zealand First Party, Ms. Ardern's coalition partner, said [in a letter](#) to Ms. Ardern last week that community transmission in Auckland was already disrupting the campaign. Until the city's alert level drops, he said, the "playing field is hopelessly compromised."

The National Party's leader, Judith Collins, said she would prefer that the election be moved to next year, but that would require approval from 75 percent of Parliament. She said the election would be impossible "if a lot of people are frightened to leave your house or even frightened of having postal ballots."

Ms. Ardern, however, said Monday that New Zealand needed to move forward.

"Covid is the world's new normal," she said. "Here in New Zealand, we are working as hard as we can to make sure our new normal disrupts our lives as little as possible."

In other developments around the world:

- **Australia** recorded its deadliest day of the pandemic, reporting 25 deaths in the previous 24 hours on Monday, all in the state of Victoria. The country has had more than 23,000 cases and more than 400 deaths, according to a New York Times database.
- Also in Australia, state officials in New South Wales have

apologized for their handling of an outbreak on the **Ruby Princess cruise ship** in March, when 2,650 passengers were allowed to disembark in Sydney without adequate testing. The ship was ultimately linked to at least 900 infections and 28 deaths, according to an independent report published on Friday.

- **India** reported 941 deaths on Monday, [taking the country's death toll past 50,000](#). Last week, India overtook Britain as the country with the world's fourth-highest number of deaths, after the United States, Brazil and Mexico.
- **Japan's** economy [shrank by 7.8 percent](#) in the second quarter of the year, posting its worst performance on record as the country reeled from the effects of the pandemic.
- **South Korea** reported 197 new cases on Monday, as health officials tested thousands of people for the coronavirus in an effort to contain an outbreak in the Seoul metropolitan area. [Mass infections at two churches](#) in Seoul and the surrounding province of Gyeonggi have helped push the country's daily caseload into triple digits in recent days, with the government accusing one church leader of violating epidemic control laws.
- For the first time since mid-July, **China** reported no new local coronavirus cases in the western region of Xinjiang, the site of a recent outbreak. All 22 new cases reported in the Chinese mainland on Monday came from overseas.
- It's lights out for discos and clubs in **Italy**. As infections in the country creep back up — especially among young people — the authorities are clamping down. In addition to ordering dancing establishments closed, they are requiring the outdoor use of masks from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. in popular gathering spots. "We cannot nullify the sacrifices made in past months," Italy's health minister, Roberto Speranza, [said on Facebook](#).

‘What convention?’ Milwaukee, site of the Democratic National Convention, copes with a gathering gone virtual.



Image



Credit...Gabriela Bhaskar for The New York Times

The stretch of downtown Milwaukee where Democrats were supposed to hold their nominating convention this week was

quiet and sparsely populated — another reminder of a summer lost.

Instead of thousands of Democrats preparing to gather at the newly built Fiserv Forum, there was just one street blocked off this weekend near the smaller Wisconsin Center, which will host the last few parts of the Democratic National Convention that will still take place in this city.

“What convention?” said Michaela Jaggi, a 21-year-old who passed by the Wisconsin Center on Saturday afternoon.

She eventually remembered: Joseph R. Biden Jr. was supposed to accept the Democratic nomination for president here this week.

That was before the virus crisis forced Democrats to transform their convention into a virtual event, in which none of the leading participants will appear from Milwaukee.

Some realities have not changed: The convention, which begins Monday and ends with a speech from Mr. Biden on Thursday, is the beginning of the formal general election between Mr. Biden and President Trump.

Mr. Biden’s running mate, Senator Kamala Harris of California, will have her largest audience yet, in a speech on Wednesday evening. A who’s who of Democratic Party politics will also deliver addresses to the nation — including former President Barack Obama and Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts.

The virtual nature of the convention is also a reminder that this is an election season unlike any other. Outside of Wisconsin, some states are trying novel ways to recreate at least some of the electricity of an in-person event.

A “Ridin’ with Biden” drive-in event in Massachusetts will be held

[on Wednesday](#), the day Ms. Harris and Ms. Warren are scheduled to speak. The drive-in is dedicated mostly to the state's 140-member delegation.

In Tulsa, Okla., tickets for a drive-in watch party are \$10 at the Admiral Twin on Thursday — the day Mr. Biden is scheduled to speak. The drive-in is largely open to the public because the state has only 43 delegates, said Alicia Andrews, the chairwoman of the Oklahoma Democratic Party.

“It’s about camaraderie,” Ms. Andrews said. “People are missing that.”

Can we have class outside today? More and more often, the answer is yes.



Image





Credit...Tobias Schwarz/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

As school districts around the U.S. wrestle with how to bring students back to the classroom, more and more are asking a basic question: Is a room even necessary?

Coronavirus Schools Briefing: The pandemic is upending education. Get the latest news and tips as students go back to school.

School officials, including in [Seattle](#), [Massachusetts](#) and [Detroit](#), are weighing the possibility of holding class outdoors.

Vermont, which has [kept its virus cases low](#), appears to be in the forefront.

At the Lake Champlain Waldorf school, classes will be taught in an outdoor amphitheater, [according to the NBC affiliate NECN](#), with heaters brought in when temperatures drop. In South Burlington, school officials are planning to put up tents, though parents can also opt for online learning.

“This is not what any of us expected, but we’re trying to use all of our creativity and ingenuity,” Amy Brennan, a community relations official at the Lake Champlain Waldorf School, told NECN.

Activists around the country are [pushing for more outdoor education](#), according to an article in The Atlantic.

The incentive to do so during a pandemic is obvious, when

proximity — especially indoors — increases the risk of virus transmission.

“It would make a huge difference if classes could be held outdoors versus indoors,” said Dr. Leana Wen, an emergency physician and public health professor who previously served as Baltimore’s health commissioner.

The approach is not without challenges. Poor weather could derail plans, and accessibility questions need to be resolved.

Dr. Ashish Jha, the director of the Harvard Global Health Institute, says that he is a “big fan” of the idea but that when he advises school districts, he tells them “not to look at this as a silver bullet.”

It does, however, offer flexibility.

“Even if you can get half the kids out, then it clears out that space for other kids to space out more indoors,” Dr. Jha said.

Some students in Denmark returned to classes with [lessons held outdoors](#), and Italy plans [to do the same](#).

And there are past examples: The Metro desk of The Times looked back at [open-air schools](#) in the early 1900s, when tuberculosis was surging.

The C.D.C. begins developing a plan to distribute a coronavirus vaccine.



Image



Credit...Chandan Khanna/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is consulting with four states and a large city to develop plans for distributing a coronavirus vaccine, the first doses of which are expected to be available later this year or early next.

The agency chose the communities because they represent different kinds of challenges as the government prepares to begin the largest such campaign ever undertaken. The communities include small and large states, some that are doing well with their current epidemic response and at least one that is not, according to a federal official familiar with the discussions.

The states are California, Florida, Minnesota and North Dakota; the city is Philadelphia.

Each has a different demographic, ethnic makeup and population density, as well as its own infrastructure to store and deliver doses of vaccine. State and city officials are advising the C.D.C. and the Department of Defense, which are coordinating the federal response and determining how to most efficiently deliver doses of vaccine to the individuals who are most vulnerable to Covid-19, the disease caused by the virus.

Federal officials said last week that the administration expected to deliver tens of millions of vaccine doses by early 2021.

The challenges facing a nationwide vaccine campaign are enormous, including how best to store the vaccine and what kinds of clinics could handle the volume of demand. The C.D.C. reportedly favors a centralized distribution system, and the Defense Department apparently disagrees, according to the official familiar with the discussions.

Dr. Scott Gottlieb, former director of the Food and Drug Administration, said on Sunday that the government should enlist private companies to distribute a vaccine once it is developed.

“If the government tries to take physical possession of the vaccines and distribute them,” Dr. Gottlieb said on the CBS program “Face the Nation,” “that could lead to hiccups and

delays in getting vaccines to the consumers. What they should be doing is directing the existing supply chain.”

Play it cool or play it safe? Scorching heat during a pandemic poses dilemmas in California.



Image



Credit...John Antczak/Associated Press

A [punishing heat wave](#) scorching the Southwest is threatening to turn deadlier, as people struggle to keep cool in a region already plagued by wildfires and a recent surge in coronavirus cases.

With demand soaring for power to run air-conditioners, the agency that oversees California's electric grid declared an emergency on Friday and, for the first time in 19 years, shut off service to hundreds of thousands of customers for several hours to avoid a damaging overload.

But the state's health crisis may be deterring residents who lack air-conditioning at home from gathering at cooling centers or public places like malls and libraries. California's cases are [on the rise](#), with more than 65,000 new cases and about 950 related deaths over the past week.

[The Coronavirus Outbreak ›](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated August 17, 2020

- **Why does standing six feet away from others help?**
- The coronavirus spreads primarily through droplets from your mouth and nose, especially when you cough or sneeze. The C.D.C., one of the organizations using that measure, [bases its recommendation of six feet](#) on the idea that most large droplets that people expel when they cough or sneeze will fall to the ground within six feet. But six feet has never been a magic number that guarantees complete protection. Sneezes, for instance, can launch droplets a lot farther than six feet,

[according to a recent study](#). It's a rule of thumb: You should be safest standing six feet apart outside, especially when it's windy. But keep a mask on at all times, even when you think you're far enough apart.

- **I have antibodies. Am I now immune?**

- As of right now, [that seems likely, for at least several months](#). There have been frightening accounts of people suffering what seems to be a second bout of Covid-19. But experts say these patients may have a drawn-out course of infection, with the virus taking a slow toll weeks to months after initial exposure. People infected with the coronavirus typically [produce](#) immune molecules called antibodies, which are [protective proteins made in response to an infection](#). [These antibodies may](#) last in the body [only two to three months](#), which may seem worrisome, but that's perfectly normal after an acute infection subsides, said Dr. Michael Mina, an immunologist at Harvard University. It may be possible to get the coronavirus again, but it's highly unlikely that it would be possible in a short window of time from initial infection or make people sicker the second time.

- **I'm a small-business owner. Can I get relief?**

- The [stimulus bills enacted in March](#) offer help for the millions of American small businesses. Those eligible for aid are businesses and nonprofit organizations with fewer than 500 workers, including sole proprietorships, independent contractors and freelancers. Some larger companies in some industries are also eligible. The help being offered, which is being managed by the Small Business Administration, includes the Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan

program. But lots of folks have [not yet seen payouts](#). Even those who have received help are confused: The rules are draconian, and some are stuck sitting on [money they don't know how to use](#). Many small-business owners are getting less than they expected or [not hearing anything at all](#).

- **What are my rights if I am worried about going back to work?**
- Employers have to provide [a safe workplace](#) with policies that protect everyone equally. [And if one of your co-workers tests positive for the coronavirus, the C.D.C.](#) has said that [employers should tell their employees](#) -- without giving you the sick employee's name -- that they may have been exposed to the virus.
- **What is school going to look like in September?**
- It is unlikely that many schools will return to a normal schedule this fall, requiring the grind of [online learning](#), [makeshift child care](#) and [stunted workdays](#) to continue. California's two largest public school districts — Los Angeles and San Diego — said on July 13, that [instruction will be remote-only in the fall](#), citing concerns that surging coronavirus infections in their areas pose too dire a risk for students and teachers. Together, the two districts enroll some 825,000 students. They are the largest in the country so far to abandon plans for even a partial physical return to classrooms when they reopen in August. For other districts, the solution won't be an all-or-nothing approach. [Many systems](#), including the nation's largest, New York City, are devising [hybrid plans](#) that involve spending some days in classrooms and other days online. There's no national policy on

this yet, so check with your municipal school system regularly to see what is happening in your community.

The pandemic is “taking away one of the most critical resources for the most vulnerable,” said David Hondula, a professor who studies heat at Arizona State University. “Even in cases where facilities haven’t closed, people have to decide, ‘Do I stay home where I may be too hot, or do I go to a public or semipublic building where I may contract the virus?’ That’s a tough dilemma for folks to deal with.”

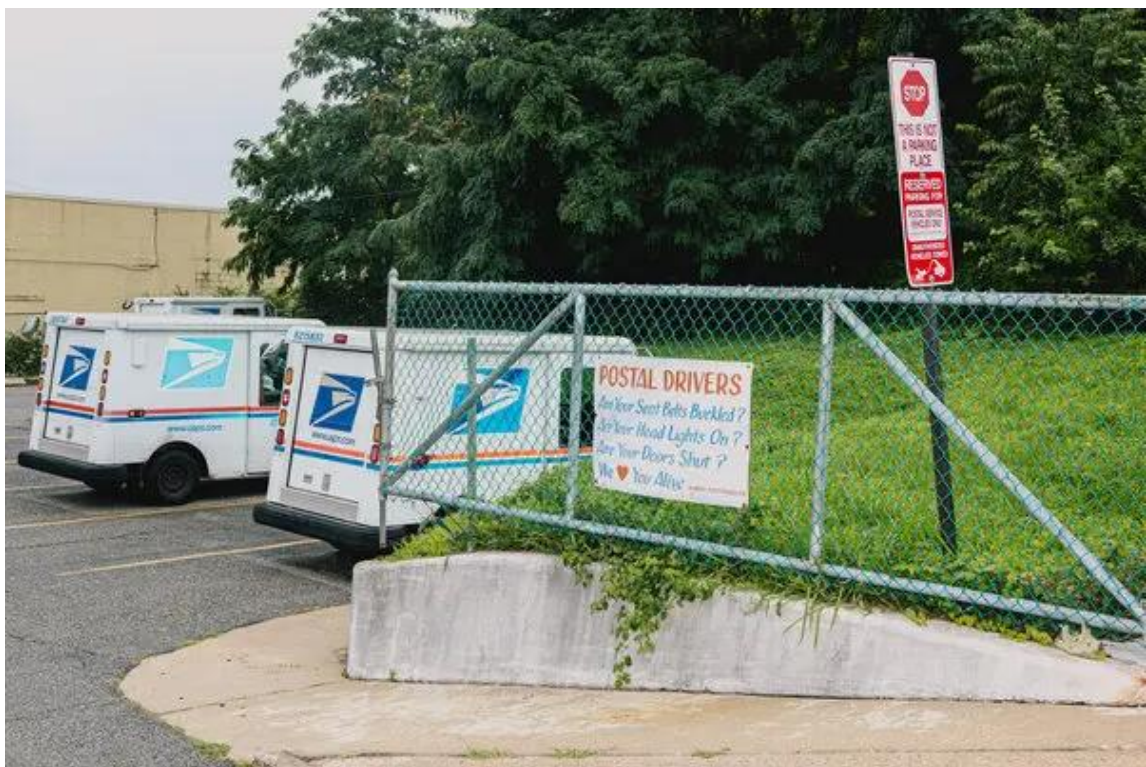
There is little relief in sight. High temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit are expected in Los Angeles every day through Friday. In parts of California and Arizona, thermometers have been cracking 110. And extreme heat advisories extend to parts of Washington, Oregon, Utah and Nevada.

U.S. ROUNDUP

Democrats warn of a ‘grave threat’ to the U.S. election and demand answers from the Postal Service.



Image



Credit...Michelle Gustafson for The New York Times

With millions of Americans expected to cast presidential ballots by mail this year because of the pandemic, congressional Democrats warned on Sunday of “a grave threat to the integrity of the election” and called on top Postal Service officials to testify before lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

The [demand by top Democrats](#) — including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Chuck Schumer of New York — came after the Postal Service told states it might not be able to meet their deadlines for delivering last-minute mail-in ballots.

The move reflects growing alarm among Democrats and voting rights advocates about changes enacted under [Louis DeJoy](#), the postmaster general and a Trump megadonor, that have resulted in delays in delivery and curtailed service. The changes include overtime cuts and the removal of mail-sorting machines.

“The postmaster general and top Postal Service leadership must answer to the Congress and the American people as to why they are pushing these dangerous new policies that threaten to silence the voices of millions, just months before the election,” the lawmakers said on Sunday.

Ms. Pelosi is calling the House back from its annual summer recess to consider a Postal Service bill as soon as Saturday, according to a senior Democratic aide familiar with the plans. Mr. Schumer demanded on Sunday that Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky and the majority leader, bring senators back to Capitol Hill to take up the House measure.

In addition, Democratic state attorneys general said Sunday that they were exploring legal action against the cutbacks and changes at the Postal Service. Washington State is expected to be the first to file this week, and Pennsylvania and New York are likely to follow, according to two people with knowledge of the discussions.

Mark Meadows, the White House chief of staff, said on Sunday that the administration would be open to a measure that would provide supplemental funding to help the Postal Service handle a surge in mail-in ballots.

In other developments around the U.S.:

- Under emergency coronavirus orders, the Trump administration is using hotels across the country to hold **migrant children** and families before expelling them. Government data obtained by The New York Times, along with court documents, show that hotel detentions overseen by a [private security company](#) have ballooned in recent months under an [aggressive border closure policy](#) related to the pandemic.
- **Nursing homes** have been a center of America's virus outbreak, with more than 62,000 residents and staff members dying from Covid-19 at such homes and other long-term care facilities — about 40 percent of the country's virus fatalities. Now, the lightly regulated industry is [campaigning in Washington for federal help that could increase its profits](#).
- With **New York** State's virus infections at a fraction of the levels they reached during a devastating spring, the effort to prevent a resurgence includes a 14-day quarantine for travelers entering New York from states where positive test results for the virus exceed 10 percent. But in the absence of broad enforcement, many travelers to New York seem to be making their own rules, and [social media has been capturing the exploits of these quarantine scofflaws](#).
- The **C.D.C.** issued [updated guidance](#) on coronavirus infections in children, after recent reports that cases among that group surged last month. Those reports come as states across the country are trying to reopen schools safely. Georgia announced on Sunday that it would switch to online instruction two days a week after reporting at least nine cases among students. However, it remains unclear how susceptible children are to the virus compared with adults, as well as how transmissible

Covid-19 is among them or to adults.

- On Sunday, the U.S. reported more than 42,300 new cases and more than 510 new deaths.

A rural U.S. county has a jump in virus cases as a university reopens.

Story County, in the dead center of Iowa, is mostly farmland, with only about 90,000 residents. But it has seen its coronavirus case count shoot up almost 30 percent, or at least 308 cases, just in the last two weeks.

What happened?

Iowa State University, in Ames, reopened.

At least [141 of those new cases](#) are students who were tested as they moved into residence halls or campus apartments for the fall semester. The university said it had tested 6,500 students, using its veterinary diagnostic lab to process the tests and get results back quickly, usually within 24 hours.

That is still only a portion of the student body, which numbered [nearly 33,400 students](#) last year. Many students living in sorority or fraternity houses or in off-campus apartments, for example, may not have been included.

Students who test positive are moved to [“isolation rooms” on campus](#), and their recent contacts are notified. Other students living in university housing who may have been exposed to them are given quarantine rooms and monitored for symptoms.

“We understand that receiving news that you need to isolate or quarantine is stressful for our students and families, especially when this impacts participation in campus events and classes,” Erin Baldwin, the interim senior vice president for student affairs

at the university, said [in a statement on Friday](#), adding that the school would “provide flexibility while they navigate coursework virtually.”

The increase in virus cases comes as Ames and the rest of Story County work to recover from an unusual type of severe windstorm, known as a [derecho, that wreaked havoc across much of the Midwest](#) last week.

“We are acutely aware that as many as 1,200 Ames customers remain without electricity five days after the storm,” Mayor John Haila said [in a statement](#) late Saturday. He said the city had opened cooling centers and had distributed ice to residents without power.

In Chicago, tensions have risen and so have cases — but don’t blame one for the other, the mayor says.

Video



Police officers pepper sprayed demonstrators in Chicago on Saturday, where city leaders are facing both escalating unrest and a rising number of coronavirus cases.CreditCredit...Scott

Olson/Getty Images

As protests over policing in Chicago led to tense clashes between officers and demonstrators over the weekend, city leaders were simultaneously contending with a rise in coronavirus cases. Cook County, which includes Chicago, is now averaging 640 new known virus cases a day, nearly twice as many as it was at the start of the summer.

But Mayor Lori Lightfoot, appearing on the CBS program “Face the Nation” on Sunday, declined to attribute the rise in virus cases to the protracted unrest, noting that earlier protests in the city had not appeared to yield any uptick in infections.

Instead, Ms. Lightfoot pointed to people traveling from state to state as a factor in the rise, and said that young people in particular were spreading the disease. “We’ve just got to break through to young people that they are not immune to this virus,” she said.

Chicago, the nation’s third-largest city, finds itself contending with an array of problems at once: rising virus cases, which have prompted officials to announce that schools will begin the academic year online only; protests over police brutality and a campaign to defund the police; and a burst of looting last week in the city’s downtown shopping district.

After a protest on Saturday, skirmishes broke out overnight between police officers and some protesters. The Chicago Police Department said that 17 officers were injured and 24 people were arrested.

“Unfortunately, what we’ve seen in cities all across the country — not just Chicago — is a continuing wave of protests,” Ms. Lightfoot said. “The vast majority of these have been peaceful. But what we’ve also seen is people who have embedded

themselves in these seemingly peaceful protests and come for a fight.”

What happened overnight, she said, was entirely unrelated to [looting that took place on the city’s gleaming Magnificent Mile](#) in the early hours of Monday.

In a reversal, Sept. 11 memorial lights will shine after all.



Image



Credit...Drew Angerer/Getty Images North America

The National September 11 Memorial & Museum's Tribute in Lights [will shine this year after all](#), officials said on Saturday, reversing an announcement by the museum last week that it would cancel the tribute because of the coronavirus crisis.

The tribute, which features 88 specially made lights used to create the projections that tower over the city until dawn on Sept. 12, has memorialized the attacks on the Twin Towers since 2002. The lights create two ghostly towers that are beamed into the sky from near ground zero. On a clear night they can be seen from 60 miles away.

It takes a team of about 40 stagehands and electricians working closely on the installation for more than a week to get it ready, and the museum had safety concerns. "In the last 24 hours we've had conversations with many interested parties and believe we will be able to stage the tribute in a safe and appropriate fashion," Alice M. Greenwald, the president and chief executive of the museum, [said in a statement on Twitter](#).

What scares Salem, Mass.? October without Halloween.



Image



Credit...Frederic J. Brown/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

With coronavirus cases spiking around the United States, cities, towns, retailers and confectioners are bracing themselves for what could be [a substantially more subdued Halloween](#).

High-profile events at Disney's theme parks and Knott's Berry Farm have been canceled, and in places like Salem, Mass. —

where the holiday accounts for more than 30 percent of the city's annual tourists — officials are trying to figure out what Halloween looks like during a pandemic.

“The sales that the businesses generate during October are what carry them through the quiet winter months,” said Kate Fox, the director of Destination Salem, the city's marketing organization.

“It's just really a catastrophic year from the business perspective,” she said, noting that with five weekends in October this year, two full moons, and the end of daylight saving time falling during Halloween night, 2020 had been “on track to be our biggest year for tourism ever.”

The [City of Salem released its first Covid-adjusted plans](#) for this year's Haunted Happenings events in early August under the assumption that by October, Massachusetts would still be in Phase 3 of its reopening, which prohibits indoor gatherings of more than 25 people and outdoor gatherings of more than 100 people. Days after the city's announcement, Gov. Charlie Baker of Massachusetts [tightened restrictions on Phase 3 after a rise in cases](#).

“I think one of the greatest fears for anyone is becoming a Covid hot spot or cluster location,” Ms. Fox said, “and to some extent we're always prepared for the worst.”

Reporting was contributed by Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs, Ben Carey, Chris Cameron, Damien Cave, Choe Sang-Hun, Emily Cochrane, Monica Davey, Melina Delkic, Caitlin Dickerson, Ben Dooley, Jesse Drucker, Catie Edmondson, Reid J. Epstein, Hailey Fuchs, Abby Goodnough, Rebecca Halleck, Astead W. Herndon, Jan Hoffman, Annie Karni, Alyson Krueger, Christina Morales, Eric Nagourney, Aimee Ortiz, Bryan Pietsch, Jessica

Silver-Greenberg, Lucy Tompkins, Will Wright and Katherine J. Wu.