

1 May 2020

# Army Public Health Weekly Update

Army Public Health Center



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## U.S. MILITARY

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### Army researchers say this is the best material for a homemade face mask they've found so far

24 April- The best easy-to-find material for a homemade face covering to protect against coronavirus transmission is four-ply microfiber cloth, according to Army researchers at the service's Combat Capabilities Development Command. Researchers with the command's Chemical Biological Center said in a Wednesday news release that the four-ply microfiber cloth, which can be found in the cleaning section of most big box stores, filters out more than 75 percent of particles. An N-95 mask, the protective covering in short supply among hospital workers who need it most, is able to filter out 90 percent of particles, they said. Layering a polyester bandanna can filter out about 40 percent of suspended particles, the release added. Officials from the command did not immediately respond to a request for comment asking how well the neck gaiters perform, which are commonly worn by soldiers. The team made the determinations after testing more than 50 materials —with more tests ongoing — by spraying a salt aerosol at a piece of the chosen material. The salt particles used to test the filter were 0.2-0.3 microns in size. Coronavirus is roughly 0.1 microns in size, but the virus floats around in droplets expelled by infected persons that are anywhere from 0.2 to a several microns in size or larger. [Army Times](#)

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### Building psychological readiness during COVID-19

23 April- JOINT BASE LEWIS-McCHORD, Wash. – Social distancing, working from home, and self-quarantine during the coronavirus pandemic could affect mental health, according to a Regional Health Command- Pacific psychologist. Lawrence Edwards, RHC-P's director of psychological health, said being physically separated from family, friends and coworkers can also lead to higher instances of emotional distress. "Many folks will experience an increased level of anxiety during this time, and with a possible increase in isolation, some may experience levels of depression as well," he said. However, it's possible to build and maintain psychological readiness and resilience, even when stuck at home or in a remote location. Edwards said it was important to maintain a healthy lifestyle during self-quarantine or working from home. "Some of the biggest focus should be upon getting enough sleep and exercise," he said. "Get outside, maintain increased levels of social contact, and learn to manage your stress levels." Multiple studies have outlined the benefits of spending time outside or in nature, although doing so may be difficult at this time due to various 'shelter in place' measures designed to contain the spread of COVID-19. Edwards said that although there are many different methods and techniques of dealing with stress, they are generally going to be specific to each individual person. "It can be difficult to focus on any one specific technique that will work for everyone," he said, and provided some examples of helpful techniques. [Army.mil](#)

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## APHC 2019 Novel Coronavirus Updates

This site provides Army-specific information and communication resources related to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The resources and tools available on this site may be shared with, tailored for, and/or used to create informational and educational materials for Army beneficiaries.



## Early detection support for troops during COVID-19

23 April- The quick spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 has caused many health organizations including the Defense Health Agency's Armed Forces Health Surveillance Division to innovate, using resources readily available in their arsenal. One example of this innovation lies within AFHSD's Global Emerging Infections Surveillance (GEIS) program. The team funded the production of Research Use Only testing kits and sent them to GEIS laboratory partners located across the globe; targeting countries with high totals of positive COVID-19 cases. Navy mobile laboratories embedded on military ships, such as the USS Theodore Roosevelt received these kits. Military commanders then used the kits as respiratory surveillance tools on their sailors and Marines. The Department of Defense funds the GEIS's network of 16 medical research laboratories. This funding allowed the teams to quickly reach out to their partners and use their capabilities, such as the quick production of research assays, to support our forces. Assays are an investigative procedure in laboratory medicine that assess or measure the presence, amount, or activity of a military-relevant pathogen—in this case, the current coronavirus. This assay is similar to those created by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Health.mil](#)

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## West Point plans to mass test and soft quarantine cadets coming back to graduate

24 April- The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, intends to test all cadets returning to graduate in June for the novel coronavirus using two new GeneXpert devices procured after the academy established a planning group in mid-March to determine how the process would work. The return will be similar to how the Army has been bringing new recruits into basic training, according to a West Point spokesman. The planning group has also received input from Training and Doctrine Command on that process. Cadets will return to campus in small, staggered groups. They'll be paced in hard structures in the summer training area and wait there for tests results to come back, which should be the same day the swab is taken. "If they come back clean, they'll come on campus to their dorm room, and we're calling it a soft quarantine," said West Point spokesman Lt. Col. Christopher Ophardt. "They won't be moving in big groups and having formations," he added, saying that it's still yet to be determined what that soft quarantine will entail because of constant updates to Center for Disease Control and Army guidance. [Army Times](#)

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## Arthritis drug, Actemra, shows promising therapeutic value for COVID-19 patients

29 April- UC San Diego Health has launched a Phase III clinical trial, part of a global effort, to assess whether a medication used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory disorders might also have therapeutic value for COVID-19 patients who have developed or at high risk of developing serious lung damage from SARS-CoV-2 infections. Tocilizumab, marketed as Actemra, is an immunosuppressive drug used primarily to treat rheumatoid arthritis and systemic juvenile idiopathic arthritis, a severe form of the disease in children. The monoclonal antibody-based therapy works by blocking cellular receptors for interleukin-6 (IL-6), a small protein or cytokine that plays an important role in triggering inflammation as an early immune response to disease. In some patients with COVID-19, however, the immune response runs amok, overexpressing IL-6 and generating a "cytokine storm," which can lead to potentially life-threatening damage to lungs and other organs. Cytokine storms have been linked to a number of inflammatory diseases, from respiratory conditions caused by coronaviruses such as SARS and MERS to some forms of influenza to non-infectious diseases such as multiple sclerosis and pancreatitis. Previous research has suggested elevated levels of IL-6 are associated with higher mortality in people with community-acquired pneumonia. In the early days of the novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan last year, Chinese physicians used tocilizumab to treat a small number of COVID-19 patients with serious lung damage, and reported promising results. The Chinese National Health commission now includes tocilizumab in its guidelines for treating COVID-19-related pneumonia and other lung issues. "There are no approved therapies for COVID-19, beyond symptomatic treatment," said Atul Malhotra, MD, research chief of pulmonary, critical care and sleep medicine at UC San Diego Health. "But there is increasing evidence that COVID-19 can dramatically impact patients in many different ways, not least by severely damaging inflamed lungs. "The mechanism of tocilizumab suggests a way to dampen and halt that inflammatory response, which might reduce the need for more extreme medical interventions, such as mechanical ventilation, and greater risk of chronic injury and death." The randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled interventional trial will enroll approximately 330 participants at nearly 70 sites across the world. For its arm of the trial, UC San Diego will recruit up to 20 participants. Participants must be 18 years or older and hospitalized with diagnosed COVID-19 pneumonia and evidence of impaired gas exchange. Participants will receive one intravenous infusion of either tocilizumab or the placebo, with a possible second infusion if clinical symptoms worsen or show improvement. Funding and resources for the trial are provided by the pharmaceutical company Genentech/Roche, which makes Actemra. "The endpoints or questions we're seeking to answer are these: Does tocilizumab improve the health and clinical status of treated COVID-19 patients," said Malhotra. "Does it reduce the mortality rate due to COVID-19 pneumonia? Does it reduce the need for mechanical ventilation or need for patients to go into intensive care units?"

### The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book

The Surgeon General Weekly Read Book is available with articles classified up to the **SECRET** level on the APHC SIPRNet site:

<https://intelshare.intelink.sgov.gov/sites/medcom-g2/SitePages/Home.aspx>

To access this version, you will need a **SECRET** clearance and a SIPRNet account.

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## Can antibody tests help end the coronavirus pandemic?

26 April- A survey of New Yorkers last week found that one in five city residents carried antibodies to the new coronavirus — and in that, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo saw good news. If so many had been infected and survived, he reasoned, the virus may be far less deadly than previously thought. But many scientists took a darker view, seeing instead a vast pool of people who are still very vulnerable to infection. Like the leaders of many states, Mr. Cuomo has been hoping that the results of large-scale antibody testing may guide decisions about when and how to reopen the economy and reintegrate society. Few scientists ever imagined that these tests would become an instrument of public policy — and many are uncomfortable with the idea. Antibody tests, which show who has been infected, are often inaccurate, recent research suggests, and it is not clear whether a positive result actually signals immunity to the coronavirus. On Friday, the World Health Organization warned against relying on these tests for policy decisions. While countries such as Italy have even floated the idea of “immunity passports” for people who test positive, W.H.O. officials noted that it is not known to what extent people carrying antibodies are immune to the virus. [The New York Times](#)

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## CDC confirms six new coronavirus symptoms that are showing up in patients over and over

27 April- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention added six novel coronavirus symptoms to its list, suggesting that health experts are learning more about the growing number of ways physicians see the virus affecting patients. The new symptoms, which the CDC reports could appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus, are:

- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Previously, the CDC listed just three known symptoms: shortness of breath, cough and fever. The additions confirm what patients and doctors have been reporting anecdotally for weeks. In particular, the loss of taste or smell has been known to appear in patients since at least mid-March when a British group of ear, nose and throat doctors published a statement amid growing concern that it could be an early indicator or a sign that someone is infected but otherwise asymptomatic. A study of European covid-19 patients found that between

85.6% and 88% of patients "reported olfactory and gustatory dysfunctions, respectively." In an Iranian study, 76% of covid-19 patients who reported a loss of smell said it had a sudden onset. In many of the cases, anosmia, as it's called, appeared before other symptoms. "It scared the hell out of me," said Vallery Lomas, a 34-year-old champion baker, who feared that she would never get her senses of smell and taste back. "I could smell nothing for probably five days." [Stars and Stripes](#)

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## **COVID-19 in pediatric patients: Successful treatment of severe case in infant**

29 April- In one of the first reported cases of its kind, a 3-week-old infant in critical condition recovered from COVID-19 due to rapid recognition and treatment by physicians from McGovern Medical School at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). The case was published April 22 in the New England Journal of Medicine. As more data is released on COVID-19, the original belief that pediatric patients are spared from the worst of the disease has been disproven. "We are still so early in the research and data available on COVID-19, and as providers, we need to be aware that children can get critically ill from this virus," said Alvaro Coronado Munoz, MD, first author and assistant professor of pediatric critical care medicine at McGovern Medical School at UTHealth. "It's important for parents to understand that they should not delay seeking care for their children if there's any presence of fever or trouble breathing." The child first presented at a local hospital with nasal congestion, rapid breathing, and reduced eating. Physicians there recorded a temperature of 97.0 degrees, high pulse rate, and low oxygen saturation. The child was transferred to a pediatric intensive care unit, and Coronado and other team members were alerted. Upon arrival, the child had low blood pressure and hypothermia, as well as continued rapid heart rate and breathing. Lung X-rays revealed opacity and collapse in one of the upper lobes, indications of pneumonia. As it was early in the pandemic, it would take a week for test results from a nasal swab to return as positive for the coronavirus, but physicians did not wait before moving into a COVID-19 action plan for the pediatric intensive care unit (PICU). "Our team was called to admit the patient in PICU, and when we saw the X-ray, we were suspicious immediately that it could be the coronavirus. We took early precautions to protect our team and avoid the spread to health care providers," Coronado said. "We thought the child was sicker than the normal child we see. On top of what appeared to be COVID-19, the child also tested positive for the virus that causes the common cold." The infant was transferred to a negative-pressure room in the PICU, and was intubated and placed on a mechanical ventilator for five days. While standard PICU protocol calls for noninvasive mechanical ventilation, doctors chose to intubate because the patient was in severe respiratory failure and COVID-19 was suspected. Physicians also placed the infant on a five-day course of hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin. "Pediatric ICU has to adapt protocols to prevent spread of the coronavirus, such as avoiding aerosolized treatments and considering safe intubation measures sooner than the usual," Coronado said. After five days, the patient was discharged from the PICU. On day nine, the infant had recovered and was sent home without supplemental oxygen.



"While this case is limited to one single patient, it illustrates that severe COVID-19 cases in children can occur, but also be successfully managed," Coronado said. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## **COVID-19 update: 9 People infected because of air-conditioning; don't use AC, experts say**

26 April- According to MSN Lifestyle's latest report, air-conditioning may increase the risk of further infection caused by the novel coronavirus. In the United States, 5.4 million air-conditioning units were manufactured in 2019 to prepare for this year's summer season. However, experts say it isn't the best time to use ACs as two studies discovered that COVID-19 particles can spread by ventilation, heating, and air-conditioning. According to the report, most individuals spend 90% of their lives in built environments like cars, public transportation, and buildings, breathing in shared indoor air and touching potentially contaminated surfaces. "Air conditioners will take air and re-circulate it through the room, and it's through that mechanism that these coronavirus droplets can be transmitted," said Qingyan Chen, a mechanical engineering professor at Purdue University. Chen brought up that the 700 individuals out of 3,000 passengers on the Diamond Princess Cruise Ship got infected. "After quarantine, many people still got sick on the ship and I suspect that the air conditioning system could play a role there," he said. However, other experts are skeptical about the report. Meghan May, an epidemiologist and professor at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine, said that prioritizing physical distance is more important than worrying about air-conditioning. "I'm not yet convinced it is a concern. But if it is, I would say air-conditioning is the least of your worries in mass transit or apartments," she said in the report of Business Insider. According to MSN Lifestyle, a study discovered that nine people in a restaurant were infected because of air-conditioning which blew the coronavirus droplets. The study was published in the Journal Emerging Infectious Diseases on April 2, focusing on the infected causes in a restaurant located in China which raised concerns about AC's risk factors. [Tech Times](#)

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## **Impact of contact tracing on SARS-CoV-2 transmission**

27 April- As the far-reaching impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic expand to more and more countries, key questions about transmission dynamics and optimal intervention strategies remain unanswered. In particular, the age profile of susceptibility and infectivity, the frequency of super-spreading events, the amount of transmission in the household, and the contribution of asymptomatic individuals to transmission remain debated. The study by Qifang Bi and colleagues in The Lancet Infectious Diseases explores some of these questions by analyzing detailed contact tracing data from Shenzhen, a large and affluent city in southern China at the border with Hong Kong. To dissect the drivers of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) transmission, the authors modelled PCR-confirmed infections in 391 cases and 1286 of their



close contacts from Jan 14 to Feb 12, 2020. Shenzhen is an interesting location to study the dynamics of SARS-CoV-2 because it was affected early in the pandemic and reacted quickly. Strict case isolation, contact tracing, and social distancing measures kept the transmission rate near the epidemic threshold throughout the study period. Bi and colleagues report that most secondary infections occurred in the household (77 of 81), with a secondary attack rate estimated at 11.2% (95% CI 9.1–13.8) among household contacts. This figure should be considered an underestimate of the unmitigated household attack rate of SARS-CoV-2, since transmission chains were cut short in Shenzhen because of strict control measures. Index cases detected by symptom-based surveillance were isolated outside of the home on average 4.6 days (95% CI 4.1–5.0) after symptom onset. Furthermore, individuals identified via contact tracing were isolated or quarantined outside of the home on average 2.7 days (95% CI 2.1–3.3) after symptom onset. Consequently, the serial interval of SARS-CoV-2 in Shenzhen (mean estimate 6.3 days; 95% CI 5.2–7.6) should be considered a lower bound and would probably increase in less successfully controlled outbreaks. [The Lancet](#)

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## **Is America's high obesity levels leading to more coronavirus deaths?**

28 April- Just as the U.S. is leading the world in coronavirus deaths, it has, for decades, led the world in obesity levels too – and medical professionals are now indicating that the uncomfortable statistic is no mere coincidence. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has pinpointed “severe obesity” – those with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 40 or more -- as being one of the groups most “at risk for complications” when it comes to coronavirus, officially referred to as COVID-19. BMI is a value derived from the mass and height of a person. While it is somewhat controversial as it does not take into account muscle mass over body fat, it remains the medical standard used to determine if one is within a scientifically healthy weight range. “I suspect this is America’s COVID Achilles heel and may cause higher morbidity and mortality rates than other regions,” Dr. Jennifer Lighter, hospital epidemiologist at New York University’s Langone Health, told Fox News. “In individuals less than 60 years old, they were two to three times more likely to be admitted to the hospital or ICU, and for the morbidly obese, fatality is three times the rate than for non-obese COVID-infected individuals.” Lighter led the hospital’s recent study, published this month in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, which emphasized hospital patients “under 60 with a BMI over 35 were at least twice as likely to be admitted to the ICU for coronavirus as patients with healthy BMIs.” [Fox News](#)

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## Reopening states too early will bring deadlier outcomes, coronavirus projection models show

28 April- Seven coronavirus models show US coronavirus deaths will rise in coming weeks, but how sharply depends on how much "contact reduction" Americans practice, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. The models estimate the numbers of cases and deaths on the state and national levels, and one model from the University of Texas at Austin makes metro-area projections. Your top coronavirus questions, answered "State-level forecasts vary widely, reflecting differences in early epidemic phases, timing of interventions and model-specific assumptions," the CDC says. Models that factor in strong contact reduction suggest deaths will continue to occur, but will "slow substantially over the next four weeks," the CDC said. "Conversely, models that do not incorporate as strong contact reductions ... suggest that total deaths may continue to rise quickly." One model frequently cited by the White House coronavirus task force has upped its predicted death toll again, this time projecting 74,000 Americans will lose their lives to the virus by August. The projection was adjusted because of longer peaks in some states and signs that people are becoming more active again, according to Dr. Chris Murray, director of the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. Last week, the model projected 67,641 deaths from Covid-19. States including Georgia, Texas, Michigan, Hawaii and Alaska have started reopening. [CNN](#)

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## What you need to know about the coronavirus right now

27 April- Here's what you need to know about the coronavirus right now: Alarm on children's exposure. While the overall number of cases appears to be relatively small so far, evidence is emerging of a possible link between the coronavirus pandemic and a severe inflammatory disease among infants arriving in hospital with fevers and swollen arteries. Until now, children had been thought to be less vulnerable to the disease than adults. But UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said on Tuesday some children with no underlying health issues have died from a rare syndrome thought to be linked to COVID-19. Separately, doctors in northern Italy have seen unexpectedly significant numbers of children under age 9 with severe cases of what appears to be Kawasaki disease, more common in Asia. Parents are advised to be vigilant while researchers investigate the cases and any link to COVID-19.

[Reuters](#)

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## World's COVID-19 total tops 3 million cases

27 April- The global COVID-19 total passed 3 million cases today, and with trends in flux in different parts of the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) director-general today warned that the pandemic is far from over. It took just 12 days for the pandemic total to soar from 2 million to 3 million. Though much of the recent rise in cases is related to brisk activity in the United States, outbreaks are accelerating in other parts of the world, such as Russia and South America. The global total stands at 3,029,452 infections in 185 countries, with 210,370 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins online dashboard. [CIDRAP](#)

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## 'Zoom fatigue' is taxing the brain- Here's why that happens

24 April- JODI EICHLER-LEVINE FINISHED teaching a class over Zoom on April 15, and she immediately fell asleep in the guest bedroom doubling as her office. The religion studies professor at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania says that while teaching is always exhausting, she has never "conked out" like that before. Until recently, Eichler-Levine was leading live classes full of people whose emotions she could easily gauge, even as they navigated difficult topics—such as slavery and the Holocaust—that demand a high level of conversational nuance and empathy. Now, like countless people around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrust her life into a virtual space. In addition to teaching remotely, she's been attending a weekly department happy hour, an arts-and-crafts night with friends, and a Passover seder—all over the videoconferencing app Zoom. The experience is taking a toll. "It's almost like you're emoting more because you're just a little box on a screen," Eichler-Levine says. "I'm just so tired." So many people are reporting similar experiences that it's earned its own slang term, Zoom fatigue, though this exhaustion also applies if you're using Google Hangouts, Skype, FaceTime, or any other video-calling interface. The unprecedented explosion of their use in response to the pandemic has launched an unofficial social experiment, showing at a population scale what's always been true: virtual interactions can be extremely hard on the brain. [National Geographic](#)

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## INFLUENZA

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### AFHSB: DoD Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Summary

Week 16 (12 April 2020 — 18 April 2020):

NORTHCOM: ILI activity decreased to low. Influenza B predominated during the first half of the season and then Influenza A became the predominating strain for the remainder of the season, specifically A(H1N1).

EUCOM: ILI activity decreased to low. Among positive influenza specimens, the majority

have been influenza A.

INDOPACOM: ILI activity remained high. The majority of positive influenza specimens have been influenza A. Among subtyped influenza A specimens, the majority were A(H1N1).

SOUTHCOM: ILI activity remained minimal. The majority of influenza specimens continued to be influenza A.

CENTCOM: ILI activity remained minimal. [DHA -Armed Forces Health Surveillance Branch top of page...](#)

## **APHC: U.S. Army Influenza Activity Report**

Week ending 18 April 2020 (week 16): During week 16, 1,013 specimens were submitted for testing, which represents a 41% decrease from week 15. Influenza A represented the majority (32%) of positive specimens submitted for testing. Regional Health Command (RHC) - Central accounted for the greatest number of positive influenza A specimens (n=4). Sixty-seven percent of positive influenza A specimens were from Active Duty (AD) Service Members (SMs). Beneficiaries younger than 18 years old comprised the majority (n=10) of total positive respiratory specimens and was followed by individuals 18 to 29 years of age (n=5). No influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported. [APHC](#)

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## **CDC: Flu View - Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report**

Key Updates for Week 16, ending April 18, 2020: Laboratory confirmed flu activity as reported by clinical laboratories is now low. Influenza-like illness activity continues to decrease and is below the national baseline. The percent of deaths due to pneumonia or influenza (P&I) is high but the increase is due primarily to COVID-19, not influenza. Reported pediatric flu deaths for the season are high at 169. [CDC](#)

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## **WHO: Influenza Update**

27 April 2020 - Update number 366, based on data up to 12 April 2020:

-The current influenza surveillance data should be interpreted with caution as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic might have influenced to different extents health seeking behaviors, staffing/routines in sentinel sites, as well as testing capacities in Member States. The various social and physical distancing measures implemented by Member States to reduce SARS-CoV2 virus transmission might also have played a role in interrupting influenza virus transmission.

-In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity was low overall. A marked overall increase in excess all-cause mortality was seen across the countries of the EuroMOMO network.

-In the Caribbean and Central American countries, elevated severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) activity was reported by several countries in the sub-region, while influenza and other respiratory virus detections were low.

-In tropical South American countries, influenza detections were low.

-In tropical Africa, influenza detections were low overall, except for Mozambique

-In Southern Asia, ILI and SARI activity appeared to decrease in Afghanistan and Bhutan.

-In South East Asia, there were no or low influenza detections across reporting countries.

-In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels overall. SARI activity appeared to decrease in Chile and Paraguay.

-Worldwide, seasonal influenza A and B viruses were detected in similar proportion. [WHO top of page...](#)

#### **VETERINARY/FOOD SAFETY**

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### **Fruit juice recalled because of high patulin levels**

26 April- A bottled fruit juice from Australia has been recalled in three countries due to high levels of patulin. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) in Hong Kong announced last week that a sample of the drink imported from Australia was contaminated with the mycotoxin. Patulin can be found in damaged or moldy fruits. If contaminated apples are used to make juices, high levels are likely to be carried through to the final product. Pasteurization will generally destroy mold but cannot remove patulin which is already present. Juicy Isle Pty Ltd recalled Pure Tassie – organic apple and blackcurrant juice 1.5 liter in Australia this week. [Food Safety News](#)

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### **Norovirus outbreaks on 2019 cruises linked to frozen raspberries**

25 April- Officials with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that a number of norovirus outbreaks on cruise ships last year are associated with frozen fruit and berry items, particularly raspberries and this information is published in Friday's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). The report notes that 10 different European cruises in the summer of 2019 had hundreds of passengers and crew from a single, unnamed cruise line. Investigations by the cruise line could not come up with a culprit. Then in September 2019, a vessel from Germany to New York City with 125 norovirus positive passengers and crew prompted involvement by the CDC's Vessel Sanitation Program (VSP). Additional cruise ship outbreaks were reported in US jurisdiction. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## WELLNESS

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### Let the sunshine in

28 April- Deciding whether to head outdoors or to stay at home has never before felt so fraught, as many of us continue to weigh the benefits of getting some fresh air versus the risks of getting sick. For many, however, the enticements of a spring day are too powerful to resist. "Yesterday it was raining and we felt kind of sorry for ourselves, but it's hard to feel sorry for yourself on a sunny day like today," said Nancy Penman, a resident of Manhattan's Upper West Side. Ms. Penman was one of many who were maintaining a safe distance between themselves and others while they walked in Riverside Park on a recent afternoon. "I hope they don't close the parks," she said. "We need our sun. I've heard it boosts the immune system." Ms. Penman may have a point. "There is now limited but convincing evidence that moderate sunlight exposure is capable of modulating the immune system and improving health," said Daniel González Maglio, a professor at the University of Buenos Aires and researcher in the growing field of photo-immunology. A daily dose of sunlight won't fend off or cure coronavirus, though researchers continue to explore the effects that warmer weather and ultraviolet rays might have on the virus. But scientists are finding that exposure to the sun has numerous other benefits that may be especially important now — including helping to elevate mood, to improve the quality of our sleep and to strengthen the body's innate defenses against a variety of pathogens. [The New York Times](#)

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## USAFRICOM

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### Dengue fever in Mayotte: More than 3500 cases reported to date

24 April- Mayotte Island is part of the Comoros archipelago (Mozambique Channel, southwestern Indian Ocean), which is under French administration. Since the beginning of the year, the Agence Régionale de Santé of Mayotte has reported 3533 confirmed cases of dengue fever on the island, including 16 deaths. Of the 3533 cases, 339 were hospitalized and 21 cases were managed in intensive care units. From 23 February 2020 to 21 March 2020, six out of 17 communes in Mayotte had an incidence rate of more than 5%. The vast majority of the dengue cases in this outbreak have been caused by dengue virus serotype 1 (DENV-1). Responding to the dengue outbreak in Mayotte might be challenging due to the current coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation and overwhelmed health care facilities. As of 18 April 2020, Mayotte reported 263 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Furthermore, it is possible that some of the population, might have difficulty accessing the health system. The population in Mayotte is young but includes vulnerable populations, such as economically disadvantaged people, racial and ethnic minorities, those who are uninsured, and individuals with chronic health conditions such as diabetes and

hypertension, who often encounter barriers to accessing healthcare services. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## **Zimbabwe reports surge of malaria cases**

28 April- The World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa reports a surge in malaria cases in Zimbabwe. According to officials, the increase in malaria cases began in early March 2020. The week ending April 12, Zimbabwe saw more than 35,000 cases and 25 deaths. Since the beginning of the year through last week, Zimbabwe has seen a cumulative total of 170,303 malaria cases, including 152 deaths (CFR 0.1%). Malaria is a disease caused by a parasite that spreads to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Early symptoms of malaria resemble those of the flu, including fever, chills, sweats, headache, vomiting, and body aches. Without prompt diagnosis and treatment, malaria can rapidly progress to severe illness and death. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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### **USCENTCOM**

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## **Pakistan: Reports 783 new COVID-19 cases, testing to ramp up next week**

26 April- Health officials in Pakistan reported 783 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 12,723 through April 26. Of this total, 281 deaths have been recorded. Minister for Health Dr. Zafar Mirza said this weekend that 79 percent of the coronavirus cases in the country now were locally transmitted. The most affected province due to COVID-19 virus is Punjab 5,378, followed by Sindh 4,232, officials report. Pakistani health officials say they will ramp up COVID-19 testing to 50,000 tests a day starting next week. To date, some 131,000 tests have been performed. Lastly, the government of Pakistan on Saturday extended the suspension of international flight operations till May 15 amid outbreak of coronavirus. As per the decision, the suspension of international flight operations has been extended till Friday (May 15). [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## USEUCOM

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### **Russia: COVID-19- Cases top 93K, half in Moscow; coronavirus guidelines updated**

28 April- The Russia Ministry of Health reported an additional 6,411 coronavirus disease, or COVID-19 cases today, bringing the country total to 93,558 recorded in 85 regions of the Russian Federation, currently the 8th most of any country. 867 deaths have been reported nationwide. The number of cases in the city of Moscow (48426) and the Moscow region (10231) top the list of most cases in the country. This is followed by St. Petersburg (3436), Nizhny Novgorod Region (1663) and The Republic of Dagestan (1147). According to the Rospotrebnadzor, over the entire period, more than 3.13 million laboratory tests were conducted, including 119,800 over the past day. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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### **Ukraine: COVID-19 cases top 10,000**

30 April- According to the Press Center of Ministry of Health of Ukraine on the 30th of April there are 10406 laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19. Most affected are Kyiv city with 1401 cases and Chernivetska oblast (region neighboring Romania and Moldova) with 1571 cases. A total of 261 lethal cases is documented among the whole country, 85% of them are people aged 50+. Laboratory confirmed recovery is registered in 1238 patients. 29062 cases of suspicious COVID-19 were reported. Data from the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Donetsk` and Luhansk` oblasts (regions of the war conflict) is absent. 2063 all-time cases are medical workers, 350 of them required hospitalization, 268 are convalescent (laboratory confirmed). Previously, national health authorities announced 300% of pay raise for the medical workers whose job duties require care after COVID-19-positive patients. On 29th of April, 241, 8 million UAH (more than 8 million EUR) were promised to arrive to regional budgets. Quarantine measures were extended to 11th of May, 2020. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## USINDOPACOM

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### **New Zealand: COVID-19- ‘No widespread undetected community transmission, we have won that battle’**

27 April- On Monday, Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern said at least at the present time, the country has defeated the coronavirus. “There is no widespread undetected community transmission in New Zealand. We have won that battle,” Ardern said Monday. “But we must remain vigilant if we are to keep it that way.” Today, New Zealand reported only one new confirmed case of COVID-19 to report and four new probable cases. All of today’s cases can be traced to a known source. Three are linked to St Margarets Hospital &

Rest Home, and two are linked to known cases. To date, New Zealand has reported a total of 1469 COVID-19 cases, including 19 deaths. Today, New Zealand moved to Alert Level 3, moving out of Alert Level 4 lockdown. The Government's decision today allows many businesses to get going again, and for many people to go back to work. Schools will be able to open soon after we move into Alert Level 3. Strict isolation and monitoring around confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 will continue during Level 3. All confirmed and probable cases will continue to be managed in quarantine (if recently arrived into New Zealand) or be under strict isolation and active management (if already in New Zealand).

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## **Thailand: COVID-19 update- Death toll remains at 51**

26 April- On April 26, 15 new cases of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 were announced by the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand, bringing the total number of cases to 2,922. Of this total, approximately 88 percent have recovered and 11 percent are receiving treatment. The death toll remains unchanged at 51. To date, 68 of the total 77 provinces have reported cases. A total of twelve of these provinces have not detected any new cases for the past 28 days. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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### **USNORTHCOM**

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## **Mexico: Measles outbreak**

28 April- In a follow-up on the measles outbreak in Mexico, the World Health Organization published a news release on the situation adding some more detail. Between 1 January and 2 April 2020, 1,364 probable cases of measles were reported, of which 124 were laboratory confirmed, 991 were discarded and 328 remain under investigation. Of the 124 confirmed cases, 105 were in Mexico City, 18 in Mexico State, and one in Campeche State. In Mexico City, 427 probable cases were reported, of which 105 were laboratory confirmed and 83 remain under investigation. All 105 confirmed cases in Mexico City were Mexican citizens, and 60% were male. Nationally, the age of the confirmed measles cases ranged from three months to 68 years (median=20 years), and 59% were male. Analysis conducted by the National Reference Laboratory (InDRE) identified the genotype D8 (similar to other countries in the Region), lineage MVs/GirSomnath.IND/42.16/ for 17 of the confirmed cases. Because of ongoing transmission, vaccination strategies and other actions are being implemented to control the outbreak by local and state level authorities in Mexico. There is a high risk of spreading of the virus due to high population density such as Mexico City, in which the high vaccination coverage could allow slow but steady transmission. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## **U.S.: Florida- COVID-19 cases top 30,000, 356 nursing homes affected**

26 April- Florida state health officials reported 306 new positive COVID-19 cases and nine deaths related to COVID-19 Saturday, bringing the state totals to 30,839 cases and 1,055 deaths. To date, more than 333,000 tests have been performed. Dade County has reported more than 11,000 cases, followed by Broward (4659), Palm Beach (2614), Orange (1304) and Hillsborough (1041). In addition, the Florida Department of Health reports there have been 356 long-term care facilities associated with positive cases of COVID-19. Of the 2,748 cases of residents or staff in long-term care facilities, 299 have died. At Home Rapid Flu Test Kit The Re-Open Florida Task Force launched a public comment submission portal open to all Floridians. Public feedback will be a critical component of the Task Force's final report to Governor Ron DeSantis. All interested Floridians are encouraged to submit their ideas regarding the safe re-opening of Florida's economy. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## **U.S.: Massachusetts- COVID-19 outbreak tops 60K, more than 70 dead at Holyoke Soldiers Home**

29 April- The Massachusetts Department of Health reported an additional 1,963 COVID-19 cases and 252 deaths today, bringing the state totals to 60,265 confirmed cases and 3,405 deaths. According to the Boston Public Health Commission, the state's largest city has seen 9284 cases and more than 300 deaths. In Holyoke, Massachusetts, WCVB 5 reports some 70 veterans have died since the beginning of the pandemic at the Holyoke Soldiers Home—the deadliest known outbreak at a long-term care facility in the U.S. Another 82 residents and 81 employees have tested positive. In late March, the superintendent of the Soldiers' Home was put on paid administrative leave after information about the death of 11 veterans and the COVID-19 outbreak at the facility was released. The state has since deployed the National Guard to assist at the facility and both the state and federal authorities have launched separate investigations into the deaths and virus outbreak at the Soldiers' Home.

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### **USSOUTHCOM**

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## **Colombia: COVID-19- Villavicencio prison, Bogotá clinic**

25 April- The Colombia Ministry of Health has reported 4,881 confirmed COVID-19 cases to date, including 225 deaths. Over 1000 people have recovered. Bogotá has seen the most cases with 2065, followed by Valle del Cauca with 797. A Colombian prison in the city of Villavicencio reported 78 confirmed cases of the new coronavirus, more than among the total population of 1.7 million people in the Nariño department, on the border with Ecuador. Of the cases, 58 are inmates, including three deaths, and the rest are prison

officials, according to the Villavicencio mayor's office. [Outbreak News Today](#)

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## Ecuador: COVID-19- Outbreak tops 24,000

29 April- The number of coronavirus cases in Ecuador continues its rise. According to the National Institute for Public Health Research (INSPI), of the 64,558 samples taken, 24,258 are positive for COVID-19. This is the third most cases reported in South America, behind Brazil and Peru. Ecuador has reported 871 deaths to date. The cases in the provinces are Galápagos 60, Guayas 10200, Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas 179, Esmeraldas 164, Manabí 554, Santa Elena 347, Los Ríos 665, El Oro 448, Bolívar 125, Chimborazo 157, Imbabura 81, Tungurahua 145, Cotopaxi 87, Pichincha 1298, Carchi 49, Cañar 285, Azuay 426, Loja 223, Sucumbios 39, Orellana 30, Napo 19, Morona Santiago 61, Pastaza 43 and Zamora Chinchipe 43. Cities reporting the most cases include Guayaquil and Quito. Health officials say there are currently 27 hospitals for specific attention to coronavirus cases, 2,100 medical centers, and 133 hospitals enabled to attend to citizens for other types of consultations.

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