

As colleges battle COVID outbreaks, Fauci warns them not to send students home

September 3 2020, by Robin Foster, E.j. Mundell



Colleges across America struggled to control coronavirus outbreaks on

campus, even as Dr. Anthony Fauci warned on Wednesday that sending students home after an outbreak is "the worst thing you could do."

Universities continue to be hit with alarming infection rates, and many have already switched to online learning, the *Washington Post* reported. In some instances, students have been told to move out of their dorms and return home, the newspaper said.

But Fauci, the nation's top infectious diseases expert, told *NBC's* "Today" show that it was important to ensure that infected students are placed in isolation, "but don't have them go home, because they could be spreading it in their home state."

Along with shutting down in-person instruction, many universities are cracking down on student activities that fuel the spread of COVID-19, the *Post* reported.

At the University of Illinois, where more than 700 students have tested positive in less than two weeks, administrators instituted a ban on "gathering in small or large groups under any circumstances." In what is the equivalent of stay-at-home orders, students will not be allowed to leave their dorm rooms for anything besides essential activities—attending class, buying groceries, solo outdoor exercise, religious services and medical visits. The college also plans to aggressively crack down on parties, the *Post* reported.

"We have been encouraged that the vast majority of our students have been compliant, and we believe this effort will require noncompliant students to make the choice to either comply or leave campus," Chancellor Robert Jones said in a statement, the *Post* reported.

Antibody study suggests lasting COVID immunity

In a finding that should encourage scientists who are racing to develop [coronavirus](#) vaccines, a new study out of Iceland suggests that immunity to the disease may not be as fleeting as first thought.

Among 30,000 Icelandic residents who were tested for antibodies to COVID-19, researchers discovered the antibodies stayed in people's systems for at least four months, the study found.

Of those who tested positive for the coronavirus, 487 had received multiple antibody tests. In the first two months after a patient was diagnosed, the antibodies that can confer immunity rose significantly. For the next two months, antibody levels remained stable, according to the study published Tuesday in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

In a commentary that accompanied the study, scientists from Harvard University and the U.S. National Institutes of Health noted that while the Icelandic research focused on a largely homogeneous population, "this study provides hope that host immunity to this unpredictable and highly contagious virus may not be fleeting and may be similar to that elicited by most other viral infections."

Earlier research on coronavirus antibodies had indicated that immunity might be short-lived, leaving people vulnerable to reinfection. But the Icelandic study offers hope that a vaccine that triggers a strong immune response will have a longer-lasting effect than some had believed.

The Icelandic researchers also found that women, nonsmokers and older patients had higher levels of antibodies, as did those who had suffered more severe infections, the newspaper said.

Also on Tuesday, the Trump administration announced it will not join a global effort to develop, manufacture and equitably distribute a coronavirus vaccine, in part because the World Health Organization is

involved.

More than 170 countries are discussing participating in the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (Covax) Facility, which aims to speed vaccine development, secure doses for all countries and distribute them to the most high-risk segment of each population, the *Post* reported.

The plan, which is co-led by the WHO, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and the vaccine alliance known as Gavi, is backed by traditional U.S. allies, including Japan, Germany and the European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union, the *Post* reported.

In recent months, President Donald Trump has criticized the WHO over what he described as its "China-centric" response to the pandemic.

Cases keep mounting

By Thursday, the U.S. coronavirus case count passed 6.1 million as the [death toll](#) passed 185,600, according to a *New York Times* tally.

According to the same tally, the top five states in coronavirus cases as of Thursday were: California with nearly 722,000; Texas with nearly 650,000; Florida with over 633,000; New York with nearly 441,000; and Georgia with over 258,000.

Curbing the spread of the coronavirus in the rest of the world remains challenging.

India has now surpassed Mexico in the number of deaths caused by the coronavirus. The nation of 1.3 billion people now has the world's third-highest death toll at more than 67,000, according to a Johns Hopkins tally. It is behind only Brazil and the United States. As of Thursday,

more than 3.8 million coronavirus cases have been reported in that country.

Brazil is also a hotspot in the coronavirus pandemic, with over 3.9 million confirmed infections by Thursday, according to the Hopkins tally. It has the second-highest number of cases, behind only the United States.

Cases are also spiking in Russia: On Wednesday, the country's coronavirus case count passed 1 million, the *Times* reported. Cases continue to rise by about 5,000 per day despite an official declaration in early August that the country had a vaccine.

As of Thursday, the death toll in Russia was 17,479. When President Vladimir Putin announced the vaccine, health officials said mass vaccination would start in October. But the country's health ministry has pushed back that timeline to November or December, the *Times* reported.

Worldwide, the number of reported infections passed 25 million on Thursday, with over 863,000 deaths, according to the Hopkins tally.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on the [new coronavirus](#).

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Citation: As colleges battle COVID outbreaks, Fauci warns them not to send students home (2020, September 3) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-09-colleges-covid-outbreaks-fauci-students.html>

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