

Americans might need to pass on thanksgiving gatherings: fauci

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(HealthDay)—The nation's top infectious diseases expert warned

Wednesday that Americans need to consider canceling family gatherings for Thanksgiving because coronavirus cases are now surging in 37 states.

Dr. Anthony Fauci told *CBS News* that those surges might worsen if families across the country travel and gather for the beloved holiday.

"That is unfortunately a risk, when you have people coming from out of town, gathering together in an indoor setting," he told *CBS News*. "It is unfortunate, because that's such a sacred part of American tradition—the family gathering around Thanksgiving. But that is a risk."

Asked what his advice would be to Americans making plans for the November holiday, Fauci had this to say: "I think people should be very careful and prudent about social gatherings, particularly when members of the family might be at a risk because of their age or their underlying condition. You may have to bite the bullet and sacrifice that social gathering, unless you're pretty certain that the people that you're dealing with are not infected."

Fauci noted that his own family's Thanksgiving "is going to look very different this year." His children, who live in three different states, will not come home for the holiday to protect his health since he is 79 and considered high-risk.

"They themselves, because of their concern for me and my age, have decided they're not going to come home for Thanksgiving even though all three of them want very much to come home for Thanksgiving."

But it is critical that Americans "double down" on social distancing and mask-wearing as cases spike, Fauci told *CBS News*.

"That is not a good sign as you're entering into the cooler weather," he warned. He stressed that the same safety protocols health officials have

been advising for months still matter.

"They sound very simple, but people are not doing that and that's why we have an uptick in cases," he said.

Indeed, coronavirus outbreaks in the Midwest and Western United States have driven the national case count to its highest level since August. Even the Northeast is starting to backslide after months of progress, *The New York Times* reported.

About 50,000 new cases are being reported each day in the United States for the week ending Monday, the *Times* reported.

Second COVID vaccine trial paused

A second coronavirus [vaccine trial](#) was paused this week after an unexplained illness surfaced in one of the trial's volunteers.

Johnson & Johnson, which only began a phase 3 trial of its vaccine last month, did not offer any more details on the illness and did not say whether the sick participant had received the vaccine or a placebo. The trial pause was first reported by the health news website *STAT*.

While Johnson & Johnson was behind several of its competitors in the vaccine race, its candidate has an advantage in that it doesn't need to be frozen and it could be given in one dose instead of two, the *Times* reported. The J&J vaccine is also the focus of the largest COVID-19 vaccine trial, with a goal of enrolling 60,000 volunteers.

"Adverse events—illnesses, accidents, etc.—even those that are serious, are an expected part of any clinical study, especially large studies," the company said in a statement. "We're also learning more about this participant's illness, and it's important to have all the facts before we

share additional information."

"It's actually a good thing that these companies are pausing these trials when these things come up," Dr. Phyllis Tien, an infectious disease physician at the University of California, San Francisco, a vaccine trial site for both Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca, told the *Times*. "We just need to let the sponsor and the safety board do their review and let us know their findings."

Johnson & Johnson is not the first company to pause a coronavirus vaccine trial. Two participants in AstraZeneca's trial became seriously ill after getting its vaccine. That trial has been halted and has not yet resumed in the United States.

Two companies working on antibody cocktails

Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. said last week that it is seeking emergency approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for an experimental antibody cocktail given to Trump shortly after he was diagnosed with COVID-19.

Hours before the company made the announcement, Trump proclaimed in a video released by the White House that the drug had an "unbelievable" effect on his recovery from coronavirus infection, the *Washington Post* reported. While there is no hard evidence yet proving the drug's effectiveness in humans, it has shown promise in treating mild cases of the new coronavirus, the *Post* reported.

Regeneron said in its statement that it could initially produce doses of the antibody cocktail for 50,000 patients, and then ramp production up to doses for 300,000 patients in the next few months if granted emergency authorization.

The U.S. government first inked a contract with Regeneron back in July, and has promised to distribute initial doses of the treatment at no cost if it is approved, the *Post* reported.

Regeneron isn't the only company developing an antibody cocktail to battle COVID-19 infection: Eli Lilly and Co. has also announced that it is seeking emergency use authorization from the FDA for a similar cocktail. But on Tuesday, the company announced it has paused a trial of its antibody cocktail for safety concerns and did not divulge any further details about the reason for the pause, the *Post* reported.

Experts say such pauses demonstrate the safety system is working as intended. But the intense scrutiny of the fast-moving COVID-19 trials mean that the lack of transparency around possible adverse events could unintentionally help foster distrust of any treatments or vaccines for coronavirus, the *Post* reported.

COVID continues to spread around the globe

By Thursday, the U.S. coronavirus case count passed 7.9 million while the death toll neared 217,000, according to a *Times* tally.

According to the same tally, the top five states in coronavirus cases as of Thursday were: California with over 867,000; Texas with more than 847,700; Florida with over 741,600; New York with over 482,600; and Illinois with more than 332,000.

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

Several European countries are experiencing case surges as they struggle with a second wave of coronavirus infections and hospital beds begin to fill up, the *Post* reported.

In England, Prime Minister Boris Johnson instituted a three-tier lockdown in a bid to slow a startling spike in coronavirus cases across the country. In the past three weeks, new coronavirus cases have quadrupled and there are now more COVID-19 patients hospitalized than before the government imposed a lockdown back in March, the *Post* reported.

Addressing the nation this week, Johnson warned Britons that the country's rise in cases was "flashing like dashboard warnings in a passenger jet."

Things are no better in India, where the coronavirus case count has passed 7.3 million, a Johns Hopkins tally showed.

More than 111,000 coronavirus patients have died in India, according to the Hopkins tally, but when measured as a proportion of the population, the country has had far fewer deaths than many others. Doctors say this reflects India's younger and leaner population.

Still, the country's public health system is severely strained, and some sick patients cannot find hospital beds, the *Times* said. Only the United States has more coronavirus cases.

Meanwhile, Brazil passed 5.1 million cases and had over 151,700 deaths as of Thursday, the Hopkins tally showed.

Cases are also spiking in Russia: The country's coronavirus case count has passed 1.3 million. As of Thursday, the reported death toll in Russia was over 23,300, the Hopkins tally showed.

Worldwide, the number of reported infections passed 38.5 million on Thursday, with nearly 1.1 million 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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