

US Covid-19 cases hit record for third day, topping 127,000: monitor

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The United States has set a third straight daily record for new COVID-19 infections, notching more than 127,000 cases, John Hopkins University reported Friday.

And the [death toll](#) as of 8:30 pm (0130 GMT) over the past 24 hours was 1,149, the Baltimore-based university said.

The outbreak has been surging for weeks across the country, with the Midwest worst-hit even as the number of new diagnoses were approaching springtime levels in the south, northeast and west.

While deaths remain far lower than the peak in spring, Friday was also the fourth day in a row that fatalities were above 1,000. The last time people were dying of COVID-19 at that rate in the US was early September.

As of Friday evening, the US—the worst hit country in the world in terms of deaths and total cases—had more than 236,000 [coronavirus](#)-related fatalities and 9.7 million known infections.

Cases are expected to increase as the country moves into colder weather and people switch to socializing primarily indoors, prime conditions for passing the virus from person to person.

Colder, drier weather might also play a role in creating favorable conditions for the virus to linger in air and on surfaces.

Reasons that deaths are down from their peak include the fact that as cases are more spread out geographically than they were at the start of the US epidemic, hospitals are better able to cope with the caseload.

Doctors have also learned how to better treat severe cases of COVID-19—by placing patients on their stomachs, avoiding the use of ventilators where possible and using them on low-pressure settings if they are required, and, perhaps most crucially, using steroids such as dexamethasone to tamp down a destructive autoimmune response known as a cytokine storm.

Since a greater proportion of people getting infected are younger, they are also less likely to develop severe forms of the disease.

Two vaccine makers, Moderna and Pfizer, say they might be ready to apply for emergency use authorizations towards the end of the month.

But if and when vaccines do become available, they're only expected to be moderately effective, meaning that people will need to continue to adhere to masking, social distancing and hand hygiene to bring an end to the pandemic.

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