

Number of Americans fully vaccinated tops 100 million

April 30 2021, by David Koenig, Amy Taxin and Mae Anderson



Guests walk down Main Street USA at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae Hong)

Disneyland reopened on Friday and cruise lines welcomed the news that

they could be sailing again in the U.S. by midsummer, as the number of Americans fully vaccinated against COVID-19 reached another milestone: 100 million.

Visitors cheered and screamed with delight as the Southern California theme park swung open its gates for the first time in 13 months in a powerful symbol of the U.S. rebound, even though the self-proclaimed Happiest Place on Earth is allowing only in-state guests for now and operating at just 25% capacity.

The reopening and similar steps elsewhere around the country reflect increasing optimism as COVID-19 deaths tumble and the ranks of the vaccinated grow—a stark contrast to the worsening disaster in India and Brazil and the scant availability of vaccines in many poor parts of the world.

In fact, the U.S. announced Friday it will restrict travel from India starting Tuesday, citing the devastating rise in COVID-19 cases in the country and the emergence of potentially dangerous variants of the coronavirus.

While the overall number of lives lost to COVID-19 in the U.S. has eclipsed 575,000, deaths have plummeted to an average of about 670 per day from a peak of around 3,400 in mid-January.

Thirty-nine percent of the nation's adult population has been fully vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Over 55% of adults have received at least one dose, up from 30% a month ago.



A family takes a photo in front of Sleeping Beauty's Castle at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae Hong)

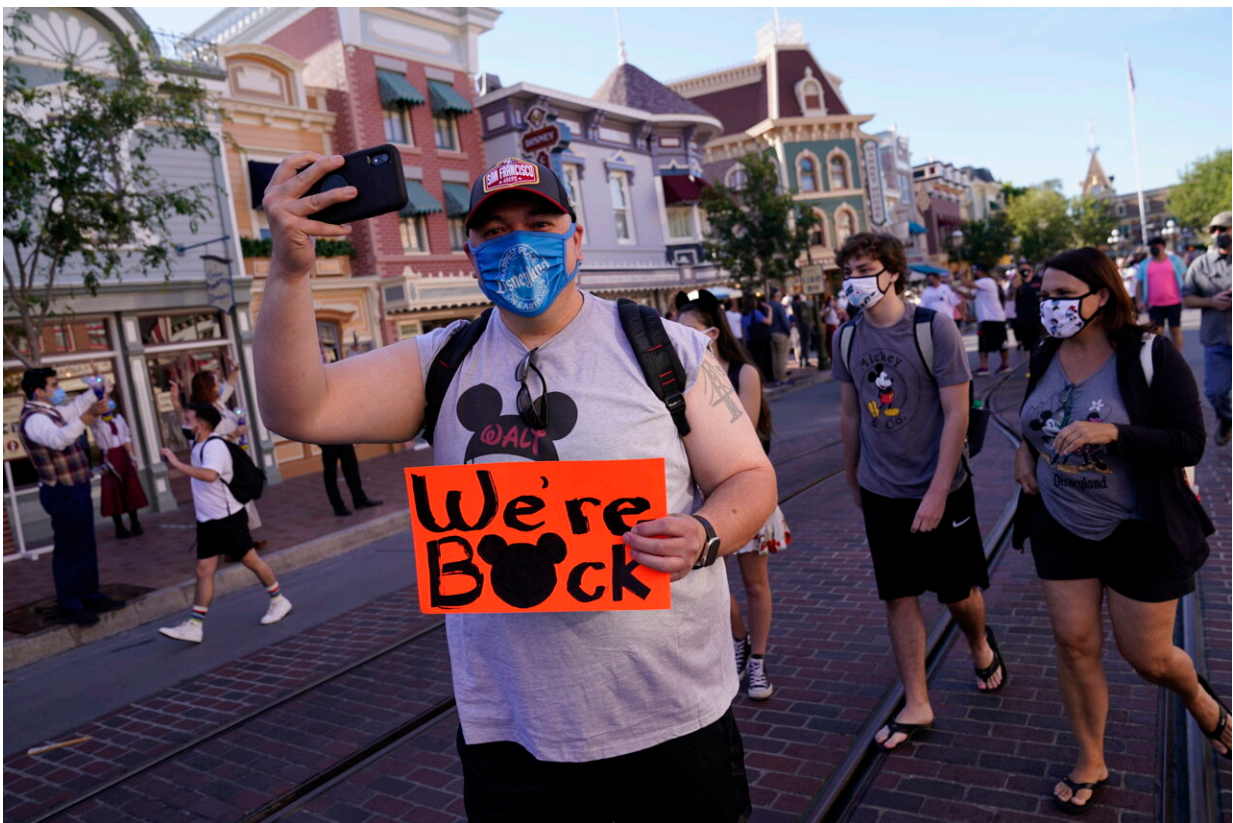
However, about 8% of those who have gotten one dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine have not returned for their second shot, officials said. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said it is important to complete the course to gain maximum protection against the virus.

"Make sure you get that second dose," he said at a White House briefing.

Dr. Leana Wen, former Baltimore health commissioner and a visiting professor of health policy at George Washington University, said fully vaccinating about 40% of American adults is a great achievement but not enough.

"The hardest part is ahead of us," she said. "I'm very concerned that we are not going to come anywhere close to reaching herd immunity in 2021."

Wen noted that Fauci has estimated 70% to 85% of the U.S. population needs to be vaccinated to achieve herd immunity.



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The immunization drive has slowed in recent weeks, even as shots have been thrown open to all adults. Wen said better weather and falling case counts will make it harder to reach people who have not been vaccinated yet.

"Those people who are on the fence about getting a vaccine may have less reason to get one now because they don't see coronavirus as an existential crisis anymore," she said.

CDC officials also reported Friday that it was anxiety—not a problem with the shots—that caused fainting, dizziness and other reactions reported in 64 people at vaccine clinics in five states in early April. None got seriously ill.

Cruise lines, meanwhile, cheered the news that the CDC is committed to resuming sailing in the U.S. by midsummer and is adjusting some of the rules to speed the process.

The CDC said in a letter to the industry this week that it will let ships cruise without going through practice trips first if 98% of the crew and 95% of the passengers are fully vaccinated.



In this March 13, 2020, file photo, Katherine Quezada shows off her engagement ring as she takes a selfie with her new fiancé, Fernando Carranza, in front of Sleeping Beauty Castle the during the last day before Disneyland closes because of the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, in Anaheim, Calif. Carranza proposed to Quezada in front of the castle earlier that day. Disneyland Park and Disney California Adventure park will reopen to visitors on Friday, April 30, 2021. (Jeff Gritchen/The Orange County Register via AP, File)

"The voices of community leaders and the wider cruise community are being heard—and we are very grateful for that," said Laziza Lambert, spokeswoman for the Cruise Lines International Association.

U.S. cruises have been shut down by the pandemic since March 2020.

In other travel news, the Transportation Security Administration extended a requirement that passengers on planes, trains and buses wear masks. The rule was set to expire May 11 but will now run through Sept. 13. Airlines and their unions had pushed for an extension, saying masks help keep passengers and workers safe.

In Michigan, which in recent weeks became the worst hot spot in the U.S., the numbers are finally showing improvement, and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer announced a plan to tie the lifting of restrictions to the state's vaccination rate.



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Employee Norali (last names not given), sheds a tear as they prepare to open the gates at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae Hong)



Guests walk along Main Street USA at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)



Disney chairman Bob Iger, center, poses for photos with employees at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)



Employee Diane, who only gave her first name, wipes her tears after a flag raising ceremony at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)



Employees wave at guests at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)



Mickey Mouse keeps social distance while interacting with guests at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)



Employees hold a meeting before the gates open at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae Hong)



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Employees air hug before the gates open at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae Hong)



A family takes a photo in front of Sleeping Beauty's Castle at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., Friday, April 30, 2021. The iconic theme park in Southern California that was closed under the state's strict virus rules swung open its gates Friday and some visitors came in cheering and screaming with happiness. (AP Photo/Jae Hong)



A relative of a person who died of COVID-19 mourns at a crematorium in Jammu, in Jammu, India, Friday, April 30, 2021. Indian scientists appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to publicly release virus data that would allow them to save lives as coronavirus cases climbed again Friday, prompting the army to open its hospitals in a desperate bid to control a massive humanitarian crisis. (AP Photo/Channi Anand)



A family member performs the last rites of a COVID-19 victim at a crematorium in Jammu, in Jammu, India, Friday, April 30, 2021. Indian scientists appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to publicly release virus data that would allow them to save lives as coronavirus cases climbed again Friday, prompting the army to open its hospitals in a desperate bid to control a massive humanitarian crisis. (AP Photo/Channi Anand)

In New York, Mayor Bill de Blasio said Thursday he expects to see preventive measures lifted and the city "fully reopen" by July 1. "We are ready for stores to open, for businesses to open, offices, theaters, full strength," he said on MSNBC.

But New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo has maintained throughout the crisis that such decisions are his alone, and he said Thursday he would

like to end restrictions even sooner.

"I don't want to wait that long. I think if we do what we have to do, we can be reopened earlier," he said.

Cuomo said on Friday that New York City can increase indoor dining to 75% of capacity starting May 7.

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