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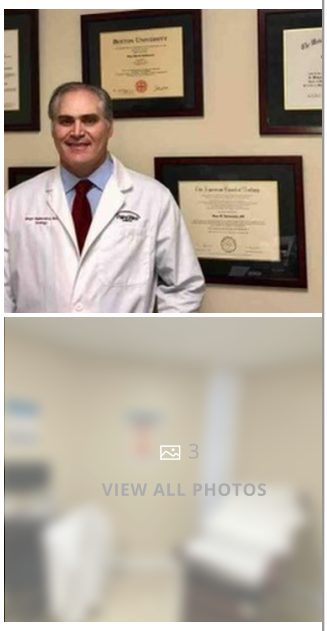
Palm Beach County urologist seeing false PSA levels in men due to COVID vaccines

by Lena Salzbank | Tuesday, June 8th 2021



Palm Beach County urologist seeing false PSA levels in men due to COVID vaccines (BLUEIVY)<p>{/p}<p>{/p}

PALM BEACH COUNTY, Fla. (CBS12) — Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, diagnosed with 243,000 estimated cases for 2021.

For men heading into the doctor's office for their annual exams, Dr. Diego Rubinowicz, a urologist in Palm Beach County, says you may get a false PSA reading.

TRENDING: State dropping old COVID dashboard for new one called 'Qlik;' PBC makes request

The blood level of PSA in men is often elevated when diagnosed with prostate cancer, but Rubinowics says research is showing if you recently got your COVID-19 vaccine, PSA levels could be temporarily elevated.

Dr. Rubinowicz recommends delaying your PSA test a few weeks after your most recent COVID-19 vaccination and/or going for a second PSA test if you and your physician are concerned about a false elevation.

The month of June is men’s health month, and doctors across the country urge patients to stay on top of their annual exams.

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NEW Obama, Fauci surprise families at COVID clinic

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Lockdowns no longer a 'realistic' option in US, public health experts say

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US panel backs first-of-a-kind COVID-19 pill from Merck

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New info shows omicron variant spread wider earlier than thought

Obama, Fauci surprise families at COVID clinic

by VICTORIA SANCHEZ, WJLA Staff | Wednesday, December 1st 2021

(Victoria Sanchez/WJLA)

WASHINGTON (WJLA) — Families at a pop-up COVID-19 clinic in southeast Washington got a surprise as former President Barack Obama and Dr. Anthony Fauci showed up to thank them for getting vaccinated.

The clinic for 5-to-11-year-olds was held at Kimball Elementary School. Teddy, one of the Running Presidents from the Washington Nationals, entertained the students before Obama and Fauci arrived.

Diego Mattioli, 10, bravely took off his orange sweatshirt for his shot.

“That was easy!” he said with a smile.

WJLA

Diego was confident and some of that came from his presidential pep talk.

“What’s your favorite food on Thanksgiving?” Obama asked Diego.

“Stuffing,” he said.

“Be honest, how much did you eat?” the president asked.

“Two plates!” Diego responded.

“Two plates of stuffing? That’s unbelievable!” Obama exclaimed.

Roger and Isabelle Mattioli didn’t expect the visit.

“First we saw Teddy from the Washington Nationals and thought that was pretty cool. Then Dr. Fauci came in and my wife said, ‘Look! It’s Dr. Fauci!’ And Barack Obama, yeah!” said Diego’s dad Roger.

Some of the younger kids cried during their vaccinations but a first bump and sticker quickly dried those tears.

The best thing for Diego today, “Definitely meeting Barack Obama. So cool,” said Diego.

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LA begins enforcing strict mandate requiring proof of vax

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Amid omicron uncertainty, Biden says new variant 'not a cause for panic'

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Lockdown-free Florida top vacation spot for holidays

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Omicron brings COVID-19 vaccine inequity 'home to roost'

US expected to toughen testing requirement for travelers

by ZEKE MILLER Associated Press | Wednesday, December 1st 2021

President Joe Biden speaks to members of the media before boarding Air Force One at Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport in Minneapolis, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021, after visiting Dakota County Technical College in Rosemount, Minn. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Biden administration is expected to take steps in the coming days to toughen testing requirements for international travelers to the U.S., including both vaccinated and unvaccinated people, amid the spread o the new omicron variant of the coronavirus.

The precise testing protocols were still being finalized ahead of a speech by President Joe Biden planned for Thursday on the nation's plans to control the COVID-19 pandemic during the winter season, according to a senior administration officia who said some details could still change. Among the policies being considered is a requirement that all air travelers to the U.S. be tested for COVID-19 within a day of boarding their flight. Currently those who are fully vaccinated may present a tes taken within three days of boarding.

> ***"CDC is evaluating how to make international travel as safe as possible, including pre-departure testing closer to the time of flight and considerations around additional post-arrival testing and self-quarantines," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Tuesday.***

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the administration's plans before the announcement, said options under consideration also include post-arrival testing requirements or or even self-quarantines.

The expected move comes just weeks after the U.S. largely reopened its borders to fully vaccinated foreign travelers on No 8.

Much remains unknown about the new variant, which has been identified in more than 20 countries but not yet in the U.S. including whether it is more contagious, whether it makes people more seriously ill, and whether it can thwart the vaccine. Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, said more would be known about the omicron strain in two to fou weeks as scientists grow and test lab samples of the virus.

On Monday, as he sought to quell public concern about the new variant, Biden on said that in his Thursday remarks, "I'll be putting forward a detailed strategy outlining how we're going to fight COVID this winter -- not with shutdowns or lockdown but with more widespread vaccinations, boosters, testing, and more."

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Wary, weary world slams doors shut in face of new variant

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White House holiday decor honors COVID-19 frontline workers

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Merriam-Webster's 2021 word of the year? Vaccine

Vaccine mandate for federal contractors blocked in 3 states

by The Associated Press | Tuesday, November 30th 2021

FILE - President Joe Biden speaks about COVID-19 vaccinations after touring a Clayco Corporation construction site for a Microsoft data center in Elk Grove Village, Ill., Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021. (AP Photo/Su Walsh, File)

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — Kentucky's attorney general won a preliminary court order Tuesday to block President Joe Biden's coronavirus vaccination mandate for federal government contractors and subcontractors.

The preliminary injunction issued by U.S. District Judge Gregory F. Van Tatenhove stops the mandate from taking effect in Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio.

"This is a significant ruling because it gives immediate relief from the federal government's vaccine requirement to Kentuckians who either contract with the federal government or work for a federal contractor," Kentucky's Republican attorney general, Daniel Cameron, said in a statement.

Ohio and Tennessee joined in filing the lawsuit, which claims the vaccination requirement is unlawful and unconstitutional. The mandate requiring employees at federal contractors to get vaccinated against COVID-19 has been set to take effect on Jan. 4.

"This is not a case about whether vaccines are effective. They are," Van Tatenhove wrote. "Nor is this a case about whether the government, at some level, and in some circumstances, can require citizens to obtain vaccines. It can.

"The question presented here is narrow," he said. "Can the president use congressionally delegated authority to manage th federal procurement of goods and services to impose vaccines on the employees of federal contractors and subcontractors? In all likelihood, the answer to that question is no."

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More omicron cases pop up as world rushes to learn more

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In omicron hot spot, somber mood as South Africa faces variant

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COVID variant spreads to more countries as world on alert

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New omicron virus variant from South Africa stokes world fears, triggers travel bans

Travis County stays at Stage 3 COVID risk while urging vaccinations

by Fred Cantú | Tuesday, November 30th 2021

A woman gets a COVID-19 shot at an Austin area drive-through vaccine event in May 2021.{ } { }(CBS Austin File Photo)

Local officials heard some positive news on the COVID front on Tuesday. During their regular joint update from Austin Public Health on the COVID-19 situation, Travis County Commissioners and Austin City Council Members were told at least here at home COVID hospitalizations and deaths are way down.

And Health Authority Dr. Desmar Walkes emphasized why the shrinking numbers are significant. “I show this to emphasize the fact that vaccines are important,” she said, “They continue to protect those vaccinated from severe disease, hospitalization and death.”

Locally the community transmission rate has dropped and so has the number of COVID hospitalizations. And Dr. Walkes says if the downward trend continues “recommendations could be made” to move down from the current Stage 3 COVID risk guidelines.

But there was a caveat. Dr. Walkes cautioned, “At this point particularly given our current notice of a new variant—the Omicron variant—we’re being very cautious about moving our staging downward and relaxing those recommendations for masking indoors and in public places.”

ALSO | Lockdowns no longer a 'realistic' option in US, public health experts say

Now that younger children have been cleared to get vaccinated against COVID, local parents are leading the state in getting their children immunized.

Meanwhile now that younger children have been cleared to get vaccinated against COVID, local parents are leading the state in getting their children immunized. Travis County Judge Andy Brown shared numbers showing Travis County had nearly 24% of eligible young children now have their first shot and said that’s double the statewide average of under 12%.

But some question just how high those numbers will go. Austin City Council Member Ann Kitchen asked abut vaccine hesitancy among parents. Austin Public Health Interim Director Dr. Adrienne Sturrup answered, “Yes, there’s some uncertainty with parents on the safety and belief that vaccines are safe and necessary for our children in that age group.”

Local health officials are hoping additional outreach and education will convince more parents that the COVID vaccines are safe and that the benefits outweigh any risk to their children or themselves.

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FDA: Merck COVID pill effective, experts will review safety

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Merkel: 'Sad day' as Germany marks 100,000 deaths from COVID

Lockdowns no longer a 'realistic' option in US, public health experts say

by STEPHEN LOIACONI, The National Desk | Tuesday, November 30th 2021

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President Jose Biden appears on a screen as trader Mark Puetzer works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Monday, Nov. 29, 2021. President Joe Biden urged Americans to get vaccinated includ booster shots as he sought to quell concerns Monday over the new COVID-19 variant omicron. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

WASHINGTON (TND) — The White House and public health officials are scrambling to formulate a response to the emergence of a dangerous new COVID-19 variant, but they have downplayed the prospect of reverting to the kind of harsh restrictions seen early in the pandemic as the evolution of the virus threatens to derail the nation's pursuit of a return to normalcy.

Much is still unknown about the omicron variant, which has at least 30 mutations on the key spike protein, but it is believed to be highly infectious and experts fear it could prove more resistant to current vaccines than previous variants. It was first detected in South Africa, but it has been identified in several other countries on five continents despite efforts to impose travel restrictions.

It could be weeks before it is clear how effective existing vaccines are against omicron, but officials continue to point to immunization and booster shots as the best defense available. President Joe Biden underscored that message Monday, urging the public not to panic as he promised a new plan to combat a potential winter surge.

"On Thursday, I'll be putting forward a detailed strategy outlining how we're going to fight COVID this winter — not with shutdowns or lockdowns but with more widespread vaccinations, boosters, testing, and more," Biden said.

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Biden added there would be no need for lockdowns, "for now," if Americans get vaccinated and wear masks. However, vaccine resistance has hardened among some segments of the population and tolerance for masking could be waning as some communities relax requirements.

Officials have stressed the availability of vaccines and effective therapeutic treatments that had not been developed when millions were ordered to stay at home in the spring of 2020. They remain hopeful that the nation is better positioned to cope with another wave of infections with nearly three-quarters of the eligible population having received at least one dose of a vaccine.

“We have far more tools to fight the variant today than we had at this time last year,” Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said at a White House briefing Tuesday.

According to Dr. Tomoko Udo, a public health expert at the University at Albany, it is too soon to know whether new lockdown orders will be justified, and much depends on how well vaccines and natural immunity end up protecting against infection. Even if the science supports restrictions, though, politicians might be reluctant to endorse them.

“I’m sure there is little appetite for complete lockdown among policymakers and the general public in the U.S.,” Udo said.

RAW: DC: BIDEN MEETS W/ CEOS TO DISCUSS SUPPLY CHAIN

Some European countries have already imposed new restrictions to cope with a spike in infections, in many cases specifically targeting the unvaccinated. As partisanship surrounding the pandemic deepens in the U.S., experts doubt officials here would follow their lead, or that the public would be receptive to such an approach.

“While that might be a good public health strategy, I don’t think it’s a realistic public health strategy, given where we are in this pandemic,” said Dr. Perry Halkitis, dean of the Rutgers School of Public Health.

Federal health officials appear to have adopted a pragmatic view of what policies Americans are willing to tolerate at this point in the pandemic. Recent statements have acknowledged the fatigue the public may be feeling nearly two years into this crisis, even as they insist caution is still necessary.

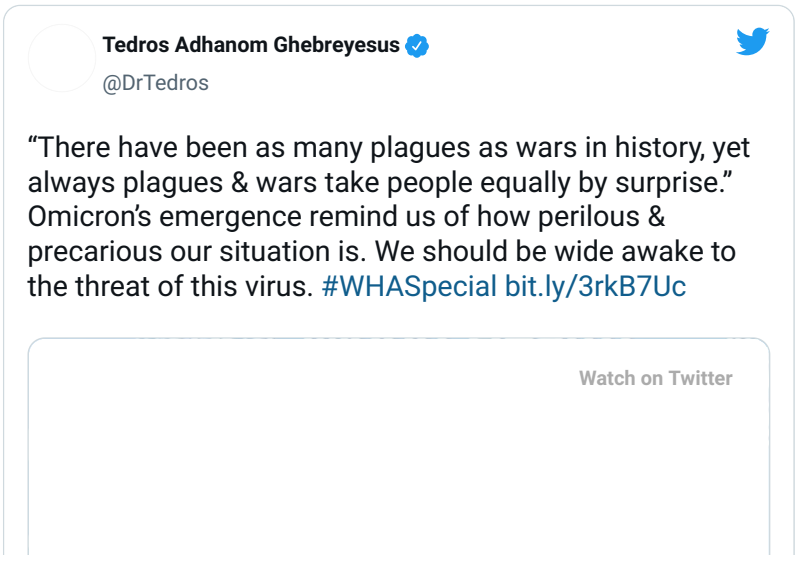
“I know, America, you're really tired about hearing those things, but the virus is not tired of us,” Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health, said Sunday on CNN’s “State of the Union.” “And it shape-shifting itself. If you imagine we're on a race track here, the virus just sort of emerged in a new version, and it's trying to catch up with us. And we have t use every kind of tool in our toolbox to keep that from getting in a situation that makes this worse.”

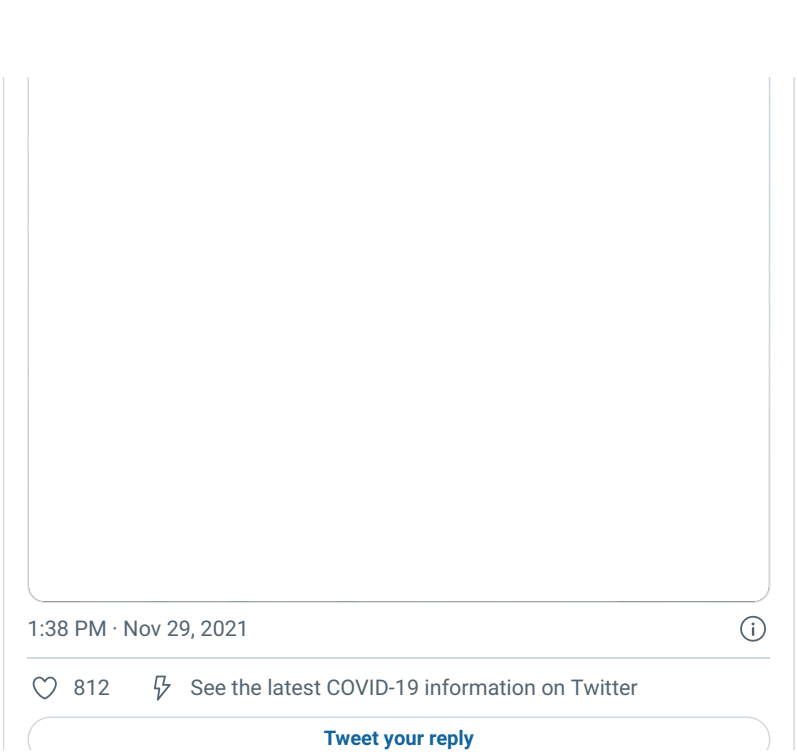
Health officials in Israel said Tuesday preliminary evidence suggests the Pfizer vaccine remains highly effective at preventin infection and severe symptoms from the omicron variant, particularly for those who have received booster shots. The CDC has strengthened its recommendation for all Americans 18 and older to get boosters amid rising concerns about the new mutation.

According to Halkitis, vaccines and mitigation measures like masks should help limit the spread of the omicron variant, but over 40% of the U.S. population is currently not fully vaccinated. He suggested the federal government could step up pressure on the unvaccinated, potentially including new mandates, to prevent another surge.

“We’ve seen that mandates work. Ninety-six percent of federal workers are now vaccinated,” he said, citing the impact of a mandate for federal employees.

There are legal and political obstacles to requiring vaccines more broadly, though. Federal mandates for health care workers and private businesses have been stalled in court, and public support for immunization requirements has dampened in recent polls.





Americans have understandably grown weary of the pandemic intruding on daily life, and some cities recently eased indoo mask requirements. Experts say COVID-19 is likely to remain a threat for years and maintaining precautions indefinitely is unrealistic, but backing off mitigation at a moment when a highly transmissible variant is circulating carries undue risks.

“Certainly, it will be difficult to continue imposing strict restrictions and mandates for the name of public health for months to come,” Udo said. “I personally believe that at one point, we have to start letting individuals make their own decisions on the levels of risk they are willing to take. I don’t think this is the time to do so, though.”

Although Biden administration officials have emphasized allowing science to guide policy, Halkitis said practical and social considerations are inevitable factors in public health decisions. Maintaining the public’s trust is vital, and strict policies would offer little protection if Americans become unwilling to comply with them.

“The appetite and the tone and the thinking and feelings of the public have to be part of public health,” he said. “Otherwise public health won’t work.”

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Italy targets unvaccinated with restrictions as cases rise

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On the road again: Travelers emerge in time for Thanksgiving

WHO tweaks travel advice for omicron variant

by Associated Press | Tuesday, November 30th 2021

FILE – People wearing face masks to curb the spread of COVID-19 walk in downtown Lisbon, Monday, Nov. 29, 2021. (AP Photo/Ana Brigida)

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization is tweaking its travel advice with regard to the omicron variant just hours after releasing it.

The U.N. health agency originally said that people who are unwell or at risk of developing severe COVID-19 disease and dying are advised to postpone travel. The recommendation applies to people who are at least 60 years old and those with co-morbidities, including cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

But the WHO revised that statement later to say that people who haven't been fully vaccinated or don't have proof of earlie infection and are at greater risk are advised to postpone travel to areas with "community transmission," where it's spreading more widely.

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Changing definition of fully vaccinated to include boosters would 'create more confusion'

CDC breakthrough case data signals rising risks for vaccinated seniors

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