

## Top news stories from AMA Morning Rounds®: Week of July 19, 2021

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Read *AMA Morning Rounds*®' most popular stories in medicine and public health from the week of July 19, 2021–July 23, 2021.

### **Delta COVID-19 variant on the rise in the U.S., with bigger surges in under-vaccinated states**

New York Times (7/17, Leatherby, Walker) reported COVID-19 cases in the U.S. are “slowly rising again,” primarily “in places with low vaccination rates” as the Delta variant of the disease spreads. Public health officials “expect this trend to continue, putting the country’s vaccinated and unvaccinated on very different paths in the next phase of the pandemic.”

CNN (7/18, Elamroussi) reports, “Over the past week, 48 states saw an increase in COVID-19 cases, with 30 reporting a more than 50% increase, data from Johns Hopkins University show.”

### **Heart failure linked to increased cancer risk, study finds**

The New York Times (7/19, Bakalar) reports “a new study suggests that heart failure patients, who may live for many years with the condition, might benefit by being monitored for cancer.” Researchers “used a German health database to track 100,124 patients with heart failure, comparing them with the same number of controls who did not have heart failure,” finding that “25.7% of patients with heart failure were diagnosed with some form of cancer, compared with 16.2% of those without.” The study was published in the journal *ESC Heart Failure*.

### **Delta variant accounts for 83% of sequenced COVID-19 cases in the U.S., CDC director says**

CNN (7/20, Holcombe, Waldrop) reports, “The more contagious Delta variant of coronavirus now makes up 83% of sequenced samples in the United States, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said Tuesday.” During a Senate committee hearing, Dr. Walensky said, “This is a dramatic increase, up from 50% for the week of July 3.”

The Hill (7/20, Weixel) reports, “Walensky told the Senate Health Committee that in some parts of the country with low vaccination rates, the percentages are even higher.”

CNBC (7/20, Mendez) reports that Dr. Walensky “said nearly two-thirds of the counties in the U.S. have vaccinated less than 40% of their residents, ‘allowing for the emergence and rapid spread of the highly transmissible delta variant.’”

STAT (7/20, Cooney) reports, “As the variant has spread, COVID-19 deaths in the U.S. have risen, climbing by nearly 48% over the past week and now averaging 239 per day, she said.”

## **Red, processed meat consumption may be tied to coronary heart disease, systematic review indicates**

CNN (7/21, LaMotte) reports research reveals that eating beef, lamb, pork, and processed meats increases a person’s risk of coronary heart disease. The systematic review and meta-analysis of studies looked at data from more than 1.4 million people whose food consumption was tracked over 30 years, finding that for every 50 grams “of beef, lamb and pork eaten, the risk of coronary heart disease rose 9%,” a number that “rises to 15% when 50 grams of processed meat is consumed.”

HealthDay (7/21, Preidt) reports that poultry appears not “to increase the risk of heart disease.” The findings of the systematic review and meta-analysis were published online in the journal *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition*.

## **Study: Two Doses Of Pfizer, AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines almost as effective against Delta variant as they are against Alpha variant**

The Washington Post (7/22, Cunningham) reports, “A full course of two of the most widely available coronavirus vaccines is about as effective against the more contagious delta variant as it was against a previously dominant version of the virus, according to a new study published in The New England Journal of Medicine.” Researchers found “two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine offer 88% protection against symptomatic disease caused by the delta variant, compared to 93% against the alpha variant that was first discovered in Britain and became dominant across the globe earlier this year, the study said.”

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