

# Briefs

VACCINE TIME FOR TEENS ■ SUEZ CANAL BLOCKADE ■ IN MEMORIAM

## Vaccine Time for the Teens



**O**n March 31, Pfizer announced that its two-shot COVID-19 vaccine was safe for children as young as 12. As of the time of the announcement, Pfizer's vaccine was approved for those 16 and older. This new development means that a vaccine rollout for teens could happen in time for the beginning of the 2021 school year in the fall.

Pfizer's conclusions came from the preliminary results of a study of 2,260 volunteers in the U.S., ages 12–15. The study found that all participants that were fully vaccinated did not contract COVID-19, as opposed to 18 participants that were dosed with placebos. The study also found that the immune system of this age group produced higher levels of antibodies than those found in adults.

"It's hard to get kids to comply with masking and distancing, so something that gives them hard protection and takes them out of the mix of spreading the virus is all for the good," said Dr. Philip J. Landrigan of Boston College, who was not involved in the study.

Pfizer already plans to ask the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to authorize emergency use of the vaccine in children as young as 12. Other companies producing COVID-19 vaccines, such as AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson, have begun studies to test the vaccine in younger populations as well.

"We need kids to do these trials so that kids can get protected. Adults can't do that for them," said Dr. Richard Chung, a pediatrician from Duke University. His soon-to-be 13-year-old son, Caleb Chung, volunteered for such a trial.

Caleb said in a recent interview that "there's not much I can really do to fight back against the virus." Participating in the study "was really somewhere that I could actually help out." ■

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*Sourced from the AP News story "Pfizer says its COVID-19 vaccine protects younger teens" by Lauran Neergaard and Matthew Perrone: <https://apnews.com/article/pfizer-covid-19-vaccine-protect-younger-teens-43b33e2b90ee8660c5a4d9d161331f9e>*

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# Suez Canal Blockade

**M**arch 23 saw the blockade of one of the most important shipping routes in the world when the “skyscraper-sized” container ship, the Ever Given, became stuck on the sandy banks of the Suez Canal. Moved by a sandstorm and high winds, the vessel became lodged in the middle of the canal, blocking ships from going through. An estimated \$9 billion per day in trade was halted as crews from the Netherlands and all over the world worked to free the ship over the course of six days.

While the Ever Given was being excavated, more than 350 vessels waited to be let through. Other ships opted to take the route around the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. This alternate route added hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs to the operation of those ships.

The plight of the Ever Given while it was stuck was a point of both fascination and ridicule on social media. The trade route that it inhibited is responsible for over 10% of global trade—including 7% of the world’s oil. The Suez Canal functions as a vital link between the Middle East and Asia to Europe and North America.



Aided by a rising tide on the morning of March 30, the ship finally floated free of the bank and sailed out of the canal to Great Bitter Lake for inspection. Peter Berdowski, CEO of Boskalis, the salvage firm hired to extract the ship, said in an interview that the team “[was] helped enormously by the strong falling tide” of that afternoon. It “helped push the ship at the top while we pulled at the bottom . . .”

As for the blockade’s effect on the price of U.S. import, international trade expert Jeffrey Bergstrand, professor of finance at the University of Notre Dame’s Mendoza College of Business, said that

“Since most of the imports blocked over the last week are heading to Europe, U.S. consumers will likely see little effect on prices of U.S. imports, except to the extent that intermediate products of U.S. final goods are made in Europe.” ■

*Sourced from the AP News story “Suez Canal reopens after stuck cargo ship is freed” by Isabel Debre and Samy Magdy: <https://apnews.com/article/suez-canal-ship-freed-live-updates-48f856c9afed-58feb908878c2a495287>*

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Richard Kirschner November 30, 2020, age 88	John M. Elliott March 12, 2021, age 79
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Lila Roomberg March 17, 2021, age 93	Doreen Davis April 7, 2021, age 67

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