

How to protect your home against natural disaster

Here's how to start making plans and reduce stress in case of wind, flood or fire. **In Money**

Injuries may slow Panthers early in NHL 3-peat try

Power rankings: Can Florida manage without two major players as season begins? **In Sports**

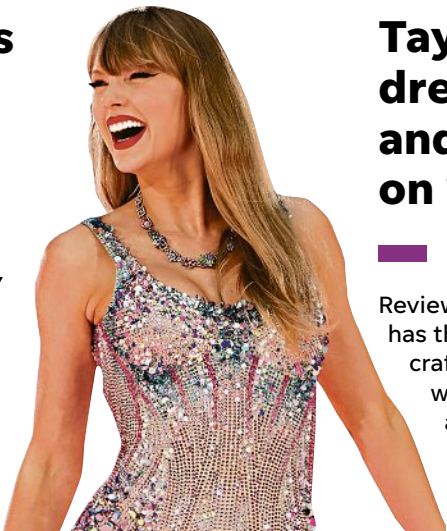
Taylor Swift dreamy and defiant on 'Showgirl'

Review: Not since "1989" has the pop goddess crafted an album where every song is a potential smash. **In Life**

USA TODAY

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KATE GREEN/GETTY IMAGES



In grief, she's the 'world's mom'

Meet the resolute face of Gaza hostage crisis

Romina Ruiz-Goiriena and Kim Hjelmgaard
USA TODAY

JERUSALEM – Kravitz Office Supply is a rainbow-colored world of paper, notebooks and pens. Winnie-the-Pooh backpacks. Felix the Cat water bottles. Stacks of printers. The masking tape Rachel Goldberg-Polin needs is here somewhere. There's a specific type that works best. Only three shops in Jerusalem carry it. The type that doesn't peel off fabric that's not 100% cotton. And it needs to be about an inch wide, enough for the numbers to pop. The numbers, which she writes in black Sharpie, count the days of a brutal war that began Oct. 7, 2023. They count the days since Goldberg-Polin's son, Hersh, was kidnapped by Hamas. They didn't stop when he was executed on Day 328. There's no buying an extra roll at this local office supply shop in Talpityot, near where she lives. Or spreading them around the house. Or putting one inside a carry-on just in case.



Rachel Goldberg-Polin has been counting the days hostages have been held in Gaza. Her son, Hersh, was one of them; he did not survive his captivity. NATHANIAL GARY/USA TODAY

That would be planning for the war to go on, and she's determined to do all she can to make it stop. For the first 330 days, Goldberg-Polin fought to save her son's life, not knowing he was executed on Day 328. She took planes. She made speeches. She mixed with global elites in Davos, Switzerland, and took the stage at the Democratic National Convention. She met with congressional Republicans. Had an audience with Pope Francis. She met with world leaders, even some who scared her, in undisclosed and far-flung locations. The news of her 23-year-old son's execution shocked and despaired the world. But it broke his mother. On Sept. 2, 2024 – Day 332 – she buried her son. With her demure demeanor and lithe frame, Goldberg-Polin is walking a fraught path. At 55, she is perhaps the most recognizable face of all of Israel's hostage families at a time when not all of those hostages are home. Her appeal has grown beyond the Jewish world. The families of all kinds of victims reach out to her for consolation: not just murders, but kids lost to suicide and overdoses from Idaho to

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Risks rise as U.S. vaccine rate falls

Skeptics and spread of misinformation put country on path to more preventable outbreaks

Experts say the recent measles outbreaks in the United States should act as a public health warning system, signaling that other diseases could follow. MATT STONE/USA TODAY NETWORK

Suhail Bhat, Ignacio Calderon and John Heasley USA TODAY

Vaccination coverage is eroding across the United States at the same time measles cases are surging, according to new county-level data compiled from state health agencies. • Measles outbreaks are infecting more people this year than in any year since the early 1990s and have already killed three people. So far in 2025, all but eight states have reported measles cases, a disease the United States declared eliminated in 2000. Nearly 92% of these cases were among the unvaccinated or people with unknown vaccination status. • Federal data released in July showed that childhood vaccination rates, which had remained steady for years, have declined, while the share of children exempted for religious and philosophical reasons has increased.

“What we see is that as trust erodes, as vaccination rates drop, the first thing that you see are measles outbreaks,” said Adam Ratner, a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics’ Committee on Infectious Diseases. Ratner said the outbreaks should act as a public health warning system, signaling that other diseases could follow. “You have to look beyond that because the diseases that are also vaccine-preventable, but maybe are a little less contagious than measles, are the ones that you’ll see after that,” he said.

To assess coverage at the local level, Johns Hopkins University compiled data from state health agencies that, in the absence of a federal database, sheds light on how vulnerable communities are to outbreaks. USA TODAY later expanded this effort by adding data for states missing from the university’s database and filling gaps. An analysis of this combined data, covering counties in 41 states, showed that routine vaccine coverage among

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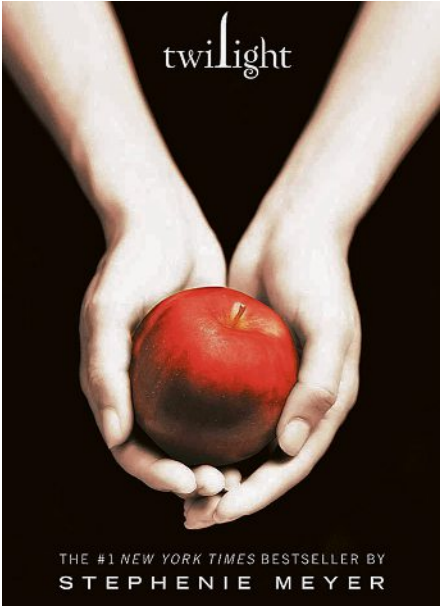
Is your county protected? Scan the QR code to search for your county to see vaccination coverage among children.

Did ‘Twilight’ ruin the vampire genre?

How the series broke the rules – for the better

Clare Mulroy and Edward Segarra
USA TODAY

Dracula, Nosferatu, Carmilla. As long as we’ve been reading books, we’ve been enchanted – and terrified – by vampires. But if you want to talk about the ageless impact these garlic-fearing creatures have on the mainstream, you’d be remiss not to mention “Twilight.” Stephenie Meyer’s breakthrough paranormal romance series, published 20 years ago in October 2005, quickly became a craze for teens and adults alike. The movie adaptations starring Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson and Taylor Lautner only furthered the



PROVIDED BY LITTLE BROWN

already-heated Edward vs. Jacob debate. But as with any media that flies too close to the sun, “Twilight” was not without its haters. Pattinson, who starred as the sullen, immortal teen Edward Cullen, revealed to GQ Spain in January that he still gets flak for the vampiric juggernaut. “I love that people keep telling me, ‘Man, ‘Twilight’ ruined the vampire genre,’” Pattinson told the Spanish outlet. But did “Twilight” really suck the blood out of vampires? Well, the answer isn’t so simple. Ashley Schumacher, the author of “Twilight”-inspired “Say It Out Loud,” self-identified as a literary “snob” in high school. When her classmates started carrying around “Twilight,” the

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