



## Reopening Safely: Help Stop the Spread of COVID-19

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After months of being shuttered due to stay at home orders and/or advisories that were implemented to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), businesses are re-opening and individuals along with friends and families are trying to navigate how to safely engage with society. States across the country are in [different stages of re-opening](#)<sup>i</sup> and have developed various policies and guidance for their residents. Despite these guidance documents, as states lift public health measures we are starting to see increases in COVID-19 cases across the country. As states re-open, some are seeing [increases in COVID-19 cases](#) with an increasing percentage of positive tests indicating sustained community transmission.<sup>ii</sup>

COVID-19 will remain in communities at least until there is a safe, effective and widely available vaccine and likely longer. As activities resume, strong national guidance based on the latest medical and scientific information on COVID-19 transmission and risks is critical to empower individuals and communities to protect themselves from COVID-19. This guide provides information on how to slow the spread of COVID-19 in addition to guidance for engaging in daily and recreational activities safely.

### PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is primarily spread through close person to person contact by respiratory droplets that become airborne by sneezing, coughing, talking, or singing. Transmission can be limited by physical distancing (i.e., maintaining at least 6 feet from other people) and covering your mouth and nose with cloth face covering or mask to prevent transmission.<sup>iii</sup> The virus also may be spread through other ways such as touching a surface that has the virus on it, and then touching your mouth with contaminated hands. This is why regularly cleaning and disinfecting surfaces (particularly those often touched) is important.

Scientists estimate that the shutdown of schools and businesses along with restrictions on activities outside of the home prevented at least 530 million COVID-19 infections.<sup>iv</sup> While shutdowns have been effective at slowing the spread of the virus, there have been serious economic consequences and major disruptions to daily life. Therefore, it is important to find ways to support businesses and engage in social activities while also limiting the spread of the virus.

Once viral transmission is under control, generally defined as less than one transmission to another person by a person infected (also known as the basic reproductive number, or R0), falling below 1.0),<sup>v</sup> the consistent use of masks and strict physical distancing requirements (along with widely available testing and contact tracing) are critical.<sup>vi</sup>

#### Slow the Spread of COVID-19 - Protect Yourself and Others<sup>vii</sup>

- Maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet from non-household members.
- Wear a mask or a cloth facial covering when in public places where you will be around people.<sup>1 viii ix x</sup>
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) routinely after touching surfaces or leaving home.
- Meet or engage in activities outdoors whenever possible while maintaining physical distance.
- Routinely wipe down high touch surface areas.
- Wear gloves when caring for someone or cleaning but otherwise are generally not needed.<sup>xi</sup> *Gloves are not a substitute for hand washing or use of hand sanitizer.*<sup>xii</sup>
- Stay home if you do not feel well.

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<sup>1</sup>Until there is a robust supply available, surgical masks and N-95 respirator masks should be prioritized for healthcare workers and populations at higher risk due to severe shortages.

## Children and COVID-19

Overall, COVID-19 cases have been milder in children compared to adults, but a small percentage of children age 2 to 15 have developed serious illness (known as ‘multisystem inflammatory syndrome, or MIS-C).<sup>xiii</sup> Because symptoms in children are mild and, in some cases, asymptomatic, they may have COVID-19 infection and unknowingly spread it to others who may be at risk for serious illness.<sup>xiv</sup>

The pandemic also is threatening the health of children by causing a steep decline in routine vaccination rates for other serious but preventable diseases, including measles, whooping cough and influenza.<sup>xv</sup> Parents are strongly encouraged to take children to their pediatricians or pediatric healthcare providers to stay up-to-date on their vaccinations.<sup>xvi</sup>

### Guidance for Children<sup>xvii</sup>

- Children should follow the same physical distancing recommendations as adults.
- Children 2 years and older should wear a cloth facial covering or mask in public spaces.
- Ensure children remain up to date on their routine healthcare and vaccinations.<sup>xviii</sup>
- Keep high touch (doorknobs, counters, light switches, cell phones, remote controls) surfaces clean by regularly wiping them down with disinfectant.
- Clothes and washable toys should be regularly laundered.
- Avoid playgrounds due to the challenge of keeping surfaces clean and limited space to physically distance.
- Limit interactions with populations at higher risk (e.g., elderly, immunocompromised).
- Limit interactions with other children.

## Extra Precautions for Higher Risk Populations

Individuals with underlying medical conditions have a higher rate of severe outcomes caused by COVID-19. According to the CDC, hospitalizations have been 6 times higher and deaths 12 times higher for individuals with underlying conditions.<sup>xix</sup> The most common underlying conditions that put individuals at higher risk of severe disease are cardiovascular disease (high blood pressure and coronary artery disease), diabetes, chronic lung disease (asthma, emphysema), and obesity. Other conditions that may put individuals at higher risk are liver disease, kidney disease, blood disorders sickle cell disease and individuals who are immunocompromised (HIV, malignancy, transplant recipients) and pregnancy. Seniors and individuals with these conditions should take additional precautions to protect themselves and avoid contact with non-household members.

### Guidance for Older Individuals & Individuals with Underlying Conditions<sup>xx</sup>

- Maintain a safe (at least 6 foot) distance from others, wear a mask or facial covering in public places and limit interactions outside of your household.
- Continue your medications unless advised otherwise by your healthcare provider.
- Maintain at least a two-week supply of prescription and non-prescription medications.
- Discuss with your provider options for reducing trips to the pharmacy, such as a 60 to 90-day medication supply, mail order or home delivery.
- Be sure your vaccinations are up to date.
- Avoid trips to the grocery store and other businesses and if possible use contactless delivery, see if someone can go for you or go during special hours for seniors and other groups.
- Do not avoid getting care including emergency care. Medical office and hospitals are taking extra precautions to protect patients from COVID-19.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you do not feel well or think you may have COVID-19.

## Other Populations at Higher Risk

<b>People who Use Drugs</b>	The Harm Reduction Coalition provides <a href="#">guidance</a> for people who use drugs to reduce their COVID-19 risk. <sup>xxi</sup>
<b>Individuals Experiencing Homelessness</b>	The <a href="#">National Healthcare for the Homeless Coalition</a> offers resources and information for people who are experiencing and for programs that serve them. <sup>xxii</sup>
<b>Domestic Violence Survivors and Shelters</b>	The <a href="#">National Network to End Domestic Violence</a> provides guidance and resources for shelters and individuals.

## ENGAGING IN DAILY ACTIVITIES & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

<b>Daily Activities &amp; Special Events:</b> The CDC maintains guidance on reducing COVID-19 risks while doing activities and participating in special events and recreational activities. <sup>xxiii</sup> <i>Click on the hyperlinks for more detailed guidance.</i>	
<a href="#">Running Errands</a>	Tips for grocery shopping, delivery and take out, banking and getting gas.
<a href="#">Taking Transportation</a>	Wear a mask, keep your distance, and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after your trip.
<a href="#">Visiting Parks and Recreation Centers</a>	Stay local, check with the park before going, wear a face covering, keep your distance from non-household members and be cautious on playgrounds due to the potential for contaminated surfaces.
<a href="#">Summer Camps</a>	Guidance for evaluating summer camps from lowest risk (the same campers stay together all day every day and stay 6 feet apart), to more risk to even more risk to highest risk (campers mix between groups and do not stay apart).
<a href="#">Youth Sports</a>	Solo activities are the lowest risk. With team sports consider the ability to maintain physical distance, the use of shared equipment, the geographic closeness of players or teams and more.
<a href="#">Large Events and Large Gatherings</a>	Guidance for evaluating the risk of large events and gatherings from lowest risk (virtual events), to more risk, to higher risk to highest risk (large gatherings where it is difficult to stay 6 feet from others).
<a href="#">Community and Faith-Based Organizations</a>	Guidance for community and faith-based organizations to open safely.
<a href="#">Travel in the U.S.</a>	Consider a number of factors including the level of COVID-19 transmission where you will be traveling, the COVID-19 cases in your community and if you would be putting others at risk, will you be required to quarantine at your destination or upon your return, are you traveling with or visiting someone at higher risk for severe illness.
<a href="#">Cruises</a>	Due to the high risk of COVID-19 transmission on cruise ships, cruise trips should be deferred. Individuals who do go on a cruise, should quarantine, and monitor for symptoms for 14 days upon their return.
<b>Recreational Activities:</b> <a href="#">The Aspen Institute</a> partnered with their <a href="#">Sports &amp; Society Program</a> to develop a risk assessment tool for sports and other activities.	
<a href="#">Return to Play: COVID-19: Risk Assessment Tool</a>	From bowling to ultimate frisbee, the tool provides guidance on how to engage in activities from low to medium to high risk.

<i>Other Resources</i>	
<a href="#">Safer Sex During the Pandemic</a>	Guidance from the New York City Department of Health on reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19 during sex.
<a href="#">How to Protest Safely During Pandemic</a>	Guidance from the New York City Department and of Health on reducing COVID-19 risks when protesting (or at other mass gatherings).

***The external resources compiled in this brief are for informational purposes and do not constitute official guidance from IDSA or HIVMA.***

<sup>i</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation. State Data and Policy Actions to Address Coronavirus. <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/state-data-and-policy-actions-to-address-coronavirus/>.

<sup>ii</sup> How We Reopen Safely. Tracking states as they make progress towards a new normal. <https://www.covidexitstrategy.org/>.

<sup>iii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. How COVID-19 Spreads. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>.

<sup>iv</sup> Hsiang, S. et al. The effect of large-scale anti-contagion policies on the COVID-19 pandemic. Nature <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-020-2404-8> (2020).

<sup>v</sup> Young E. The Deceptively Simple Number Sparking Coronavirus Fears. The Atlantic. Jan 28, 2020.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2020/01/how-fast-and-far-will-new-coronavirus-spread/605632/>.

<sup>vi</sup> Dhillon RS, et al. A Plan to Safely Reopen the U.S. Despite Inadequate Testing. Harvard Business Review.

May 01, 2020. Online at: <https://hbr.org/2020/05/a-plan-to-safely-reopen-the-u-s-despite-inadequate-testing>.

<sup>vii</sup> Chu D, et al. Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis. The Lancet. June 01, 2020. DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)31142-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31142-9).

<sup>viii</sup> Johns Hopkins University. Coronavirus Face Masks & Protection FAQs. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-face-masks-what-you-need-to-know>.

<sup>ix</sup> CDC. Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19. Online at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

<sup>x</sup> Miller R, Englund K. Transmission and risk factors of COVID-19. Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine. Cleveland Clinic Journal of Medicine June 2020, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3949/ccjm.87a.ccc029>.

<sup>xi</sup> CDC. When to wear gloves. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/gloves.html>.

<sup>xii</sup> CDC. When to wear gloves. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/gloves.html>.

<sup>xiii</sup> CDC. Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). <https://www.cdc.gov/mis-c/>.

<sup>xiv</sup> Johns Hopkins Medicine. Coronavirus in Babies and Kids. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-in-babies-and-children>.

<sup>xv</sup> Santoli JM, Lindley MC, DeSilva MB, et al. Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Routine Pediatric Vaccine Ordering and Administration — United States, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:591–593. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6919e2external-icdn>.

<sup>xvi</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. AAP urges vaccination as rates drop due to COVID-19. May 8, 2020.

<https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/05/08/covid19vaccinations050820>

<sup>xvii</sup> CDC. Help Stop the Spread of COVID-19 in Children.

<sup>xviii</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. AAP Statement on AAP Statement on New Data Showing Declines in Childhood Immunizations.

<https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2020/aap-statement-on-new-data-showing-declines-in-childhood-immunizations/>.

<sup>xix</sup> Stokes EK, Zambrano LD, Anderson KN, et al. Coronavirus Disease 2019 Case Surveillance—United States, January 22–May 30, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. ePub: 15 June 2020. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6924e2>.

<sup>xx</sup> CDC. Groups at Higher Risk for Severe Illness. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/groups-at-higher-risk.html>.

<sup>xxi</sup> Harm Reduction Coalition. COVID-19 Guidance for People Who Use Drugs and Harm Reduction Programs.

<https://harmreduction.org/miscellaneous/covid-19-guidance-for-people-who-use-drugs-and-harm-reduction-programs/>.

<sup>xxii</sup> National Healthcare for the Homeless Council. COVID-19 and People Experiencing Homelessness: Resources and Guidance. <https://nhchc.org/clinical-practice/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/>.

<sup>xxiii</sup> CDC. Daily Life and Coping. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/index.html>