

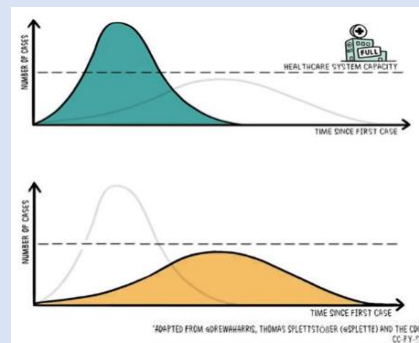
Social Distancing: What It Means and Tips to Remain Safe

Why It Matters

COVID-19 is thought to mainly spread from person-to-person; the CDC suggests the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus.¹ *Social distancing* is a simple way to minimize and prevent spreading the virus so fewer people get sick.

By now, you've heard of social distancing, and it's probably been hard and overwhelming at times. There's good news though! Social distancing is helping to "flatten the curve,"² which has eased some restrictions like sheltering in place and allowed businesses to reopen in Maryland.

"Flattening the curve" means slowing the spread of COVID-19. A flatter curve illustrates a slowdown in the infection rate. The goal is to reduce the number of patients who need urgent medical care all at once.³



Keep in Mind

Even if you feel healthy, it's important to practice social distancing to protect your family and community. Not everyone develops symptoms – also known as "asymptomatic." This means you could spread the virus without feeling sick.^{4, 5}

Social distancing helps until a vaccine is developed and becomes widely available.



Wear a mask in public
#MASKSONMARYLAND



Wash your hands often



Avoid touching your face

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) How to Protect Yourself & Others*, April 2020. Available at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Social Distancing Interventions to Delay or Flatten the Epidemic Curve of Coronavirus Disease*, August 2020 (early release). Available at: wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/8/20-1093_article.

³ History News Network, *What Does "Flatten the Curve" Mean? We Asked the UM Medical Historian who Helped Coin the Term*, March 2020. Available at: historynewsnetwork.org/article/174690.

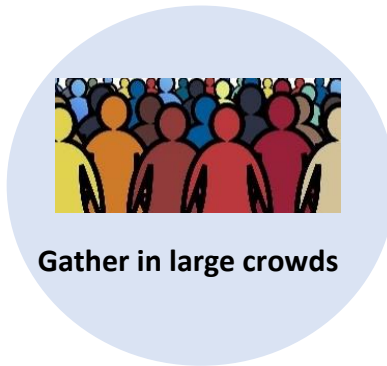
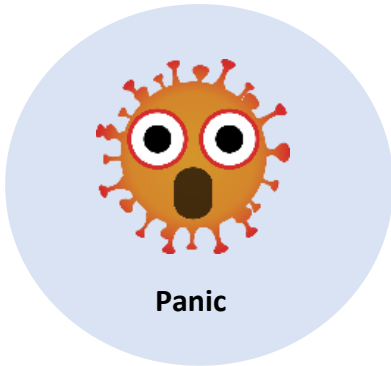
⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Social Distancing Keep your Distance to Slow the Spread*, June 2020. Available at: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html.

⁵ The proportion of people who do not develop COVID-19 symptoms but go on to infect others is still largely unknown. More information is available at: www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/transmission-of-sars-cov-2-implications-for-infection-prevention-precautions.

How to Practice Social Distancing

Medical and public health experts offer the following tips to help you make sense of what you should and shouldn't do.^{6,7}

Social Distancing Don'ts:



Social Distancing Do's:



⁶ American Red Cross, *How to Social Distance During COVID-19*, May 2020. Available at: www.redcross.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/coronavirus-what-social-distancing-means.html.

⁷ Johns Hopkins Medicine, *Coronavirus, Social and Physical Distancing and Self-Quarantine*, June 2020. Available at: www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/coronavirus-social-distancing-and-self-quarantine.

Other Things to Consider

Give telehealth a try.

It's a great way to practice social distancing while still getting the care you need. You can have a video visit with a health care provider, a convenient and safe alternative to in-person care that eliminates the need to travel or sit in a waiting room – this reduces your risk of catching or spreading an illness.⁸

If you have a medical emergency, call 911 for immediate medical assistance or go to your nearest emergency room.

Stay up to date with local authorities.

Things are changing as we learn more about the virus so make sure to stay up to date on social distancing guidelines within your community.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Coronavirus (COVID-19)*
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html

Maryland Department of Health, *Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak*
coronavirus.maryland.gov/

Maryland Health Care Commission, *Understanding Telehealth: A Resource Guide for Consumers*
mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/Pages/hit/hit_telemedicine/hit_telemedicine_consumer.aspx

*This message is brought to you by the
Maryland Health Care Commission*

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Learn more about social distancing from the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Emergency Management Agency: phpa.health.maryland.gov/Documents/Social%20Distancing-4.pdf

⁸ Maryland Health Care Commission, *Telehealth: What it is, How it Works, and Getting Started*, May 2020. Available at: mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit/documents/HIT_Telehealth_What_It_Is_Flyer.pdf.

What's a video visit?

Video visits connect you with a health care provider located in a different location; all you need is a computer, tablet, or smartphone.



Talk to your health care provider to find out if telehealth is the right option for you. For more information about telehealth, check out these answers to frequently asked questions:

mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit/documents/HIT_Consumer_VV_FAQ.pdf