

ADVERTORIAL

COVID-19 | STAY SAFE

My Fellow Americans,

The recent surge in COVID-19 cases over the past month is renewing discussion about how the virus spreads. We've learned a lot since the start of the year. As a result, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has new information about how COVID-19 spreads.

The CDC now believes the **primary** way people get COVID-19 is through close person-to-person contact. It happens when tiny respiratory droplets become airborne when an infected person talks, sneezes or coughs. Someone nearby inhales them and becomes infected. The more and the longer you're around others, the higher the risk of infection.¹

More than 52,000 new cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. were reported July 4 and July 5. New records are set almost daily in states like Texas and Florida, ranked as having the third and fourth highest number of cases in the U.S. as of July 8.² On that same day, 56 Florida hospitals reported their intensive care units were at capacity.³

Many states are slowing or delaying plans to re-open more businesses and taking other measures to address the soaring numbers. The Texas governor ordered all bars to shut back down on June 26. Now, most Texas residents must again wear masks when they go out in public or pay a fine. In Florida, 17 counties and 49 cities have adopted mask orders of some type.

The CDC recommends the use of face masks, which may be the key to helping us end the pandemic. That may sound dramatic, but consider the results of two recently published academic articles.

An article published in the widely respected medical journal **The Lancet** looked at 172 studies focusing on the transmission of three virus strains – SARS, MERS, and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. It found the proper use of face masks covering the mouth and nose reduced the risk of viral transmission by approximately 65%.⁴

¹www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

²www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html

³nationalreview.com/news/dozens-of-florida-hospital-icuc-at-capacity-as-coronavirus-cases-spike/

⁴[www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31142-9.pdf](http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(20)31142-9.pdf)

⁵royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspa.2020.0376

⁶jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2768086

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The second article published in the **Proceeding of the Royal Society** discusses R naught and COVID-19. R naught is a measurement of how contagious a disease is. When the R value is greater than 1, infections will continue to spread. When the value is less than 1, the outbreak will come to an end. The Royal Society study, based on a mathematical model, showed that if 75% of the population wore masks that were only 75% effective, the R value could drop below 1 in as little as three months. That would effectively end the pandemic.⁵

Dr. Michael Almaleh, chief of specialty care at WellMed, has a good video presentation on these studies located at www.WellMedHealthCare.com/covid-19. **Show you are an American hero. Always wear your mask in public.**

It sounds so simple, but it requires us all to work together. We must be vigilant and consistent. The one time you don't wear a mask in public, or fail to maintain six feet of distance, or don't wash your hands, is the one time it takes to become infected. Don't take the chance. Protect yourself and your family. Do it for yourself. Do it for the ones you love. Do it for us all.

Finally, contact your doctor and make sure you get the care you need. Many practices offer online visits, and have taken steps to maximize safety at the clinic.

A new study published July 1 in **JAMA** says delayed care for chronic diseases may be contributing to a 20% increase in the predicted mortality rate in the United States. I will dive into this issue next week.⁶

I also invite you to visit **WellMedHealthCare.com** to get the latest information on COVID-19. We are all in this together.



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