

# CORONAVIRUS AND THE NEW NORMAL

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed life as we know it. As the rate of infections begins to slow down in some hard-hit areas, early signs of recovery are appearing. Some towns, cities and states are starting to slowly reopen businesses, public areas and more.



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What will “the new normal” mean for you? Lisa Maragakis, senior director of infection prevention, discusses things to consider, possible next steps and how you can continue to keep yourself healthy.

## ► HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM COVID-19 AS CITIES AND STATES START TO REOPEN?

Until a safe, effective coronavirus vaccine is available, there will continue to be a risk of infection, even as people get back to work, school and a more normal life.

The protective practices you learned and followed in March and April of 2020 can continue to protect you and your family:

- **Social and physical distancing.** Staying at least 6 feet away from anyone not living in your household can help you prevent infection.
- **Handwashing.** Washing your hands for at least 20 seconds frequently throughout the day, or using hand sanitizer, is an effective way to avoid getting sick with the coronavirus or other germs.
- Wearing a **face mask** protects others from illness if you're carrying the virus and don't know it.

- Practice **safe grocery shopping and food handling**.
- Continue to **practice mindfulness and stress relief**, as you did during stay-at-home orders. Mental and emotional well-being is a key aspect of health.

Staying informed about coronavirus can also help you:

- Know what to do **if you think you have the coronavirus**: whom to call, where to go.
- Understand what to expect **if you're diagnosed with COVID-19**.
- Look out for signs of the **coronavirus in babies and kids**. Although the majority of children who contract COVID-19 have mild symptoms, a small percentage of patients under age 18 have experienced severe disease, including a **rare inflammatory condition**.
- Understand **who's more at risk**. Older people and those living with heart disease, diabetes and other chronic illnesses have a greater chance of dying from COVID-19.



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## ► WHAT BUSINESS PRECAUTIONS FOR CORONAVIRUS SHOULD I KNOW BEFORE GOING BACK TO WORK?

Companies are developing plans to help ensure the safety of their employees. At Johns Hopkins Medicine, we're considering how to return to some of our normal activities while keeping everyone safe. Our current safety measures include:

- **Daily, mandatory self-assessment for all employees of possible coronavirus symptoms.**
- **Isolation at home and testing if needed for any employee who has symptoms. Employees don't return to work until they are cleared by the Johns Hopkins Medicine Occupational Health Department.**
- **Masking for everyone entering any of our facilities.**
- **Social distancing in all areas, except during medical care activities when appropriate personal protective equipment is worn.**

Other measures, such as rigorous cleaning of all facilities, including in exam, operating and procedure rooms before and after each patient, are also being implemented to [keep all our patients and staff safe.](#)

## ► WHEN WILL THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BE OVER?

If you are wondering when will the coronavirus end, you're not alone. As communities start to reopen, we will likely see future outbreaks and clusters of viral transmission, which could cause the number of COVID-19 cases to increase again. That's because COVID-19 is contagious: Each person who catches it infects, on average, about two other people, and some infect many more. Many people infected with the virus do not have symptoms and can unknowingly infect another person who could become very sick.

That means that, until a vaccine is widely available, even if your location is "open for business," you still need to take precautions so that employees and customers don't catch or spread COVID-19. For your safety and the safety of others, continue to follow all safety guidelines described above.

