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COVID-19 Guidance and Prevention for Individuals and the Community

Updated June 29, 2020

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Individuals, communities and organizations are essential to controlling the spread of COVID-19 in Mississippi. The precautions and guidances here can keep you and the state safer and healthier.

Mississippi Coronavirus Hotline (7 days a week, 7 a.m.–7 p.m.): **877-978-6453**

Simple steps work against COVID-19 when everyone takes them together. [View full size video »](#)

General Information

COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus that causes flu-like illness ranging from mild to severe, with symptoms of fever, coughing, fatigue and difficulty breathing. Like the flu, COVID-19 is thought to spread person-to-person by close contact (within 6 feet) and by coughing or sneezing. Other possible routes of transmission may include touching surfaces contaminated by the virus.

- [Current COVID-19 Cases in Mississippi](#)
- [Questions and Answers about Coronavirus COVID-19](#) CDC
- [Full COVID-19 information from the CDC](#)
- [Information for travelers](#)
- [Handouts: Basic disease prevention, handwashing and more](#)
- [Spanish and Vietnamese materials](#)

Re-Opening Guidances and Recommendations

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Prevention for Individuals

The precautions and requirements below have been determined by the State Health Officer or ordered by the Governor.

- [Governor's order #1492 for safely resuming business and community activities](#)
- [All COVID-19 orders](#)

Protect Others:

- **Stay home if you are sick**, and avoid close contact with anyone who is ill.
- If you have been tested for COVID-19, **stay home** and away from others until you get your test result. [Learn more »](#)
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. When possible, cough, sneeze or blow your nose into a tissue, then throw the tissue away.

- If you are sick, especially with shortness of breath, severe cough, fever or severe chest pain, call a doctor or healthcare provider for instructions on how to visit them safely.
- Wear a mask or face covering away from home. Some business employees in contact with customers are required to wear a face covering.

Wear a mask in public places

All Mississippi residents should wear non-medical grade masks or homemade cloth face coverings when shopping, running errands, or otherwise away from home. Face covering is especially important when a distance of at least 6 feet cannot easily be maintained between persons. This recommendation does **not** include manufactured (surgical) or N95 masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers and first responders.

- [Making, wearing and cleaning your own cloth mask](#)

Protect Yourself

- Practice social distancing whenever possible. Keep **at least** 6 feet apart from others when you are outside your home.
- Avoid large social gatherings and community events. Follow restrictions on indoor and outdoor gathering sizes. [Details »](#)
- Avoid non-essential business travel.
- If you are 65 or older, or in poor health, stay home as much as possible ([see precaution below](#)).

Practice Protective Hygiene

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, especially after coughing or sneezing, blowing your nose, and using the bathroom. Effective handwashing takes at least 20 seconds, and includes cleaning under fingernails, between fingers, and washing the back of hands as well as the front. [More proper handwashing tips »](#)
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.
- Stay in good overall health by eating right and staying active. If you are living with diabetes, heart disease or other medical condition, keep in touch with your doctor and stay current with your treatment.
- [More about preventing the spread of disease](#)

Local Testing Providers

Local healthcare providers are now providing sampling and test services at locations across the state for those with COVID-19 symptoms.

- [View local testing providers](#)

Families, Women and Children

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer specialized recommendations for:

- [Home and Family](#)
- [Pregnancy and Breastfeeding](#)
- [Children](#)

Older Adults and People at High Risk

People at risk for serious illness from COVID-19 are adults 65 and over, those who are obese, those with a chronic illness such as heart disease, diabetes or lung disease, and anyone receiving treatments which may compromise their immune system. These people should take precautions at all times to limit their exposure to others who may be ill:

- Stay home as much as possible
- If a household member has been away from home in a public place, keep a safe distance (6 feet or more) from them for 14 days.
- Keep more space (6 feet if possible) between you and others as you go through the day.
- If you do go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, and practice strong social distancing. Pay closer attention to hygiene and cleanliness.
- Wash your hands often, especially after being in public places.
- [Full recommendations from the CDC for people at high risk](#)

Prevention in the Community

Schools, businesses, events and other places that people gather should take steps to prevent or limit the spread of viral illness.

Long-Term Care Facilities

Visitation to nursing homes and other long-term care facilities is now highly restricted in order to protect residents.

- Discontinue group social activities and group visits to help prevent possible disease transmission.
- Post signs that discourage all nonessential visitation and discourage ill visitors from entering the facility.
- Keep all ill visitors away from the facility for at least 48 hours after symptoms resolve.
- Only allow visitors for residents receiving end-of-life care or to provide critical assistance, or as allowed by the facility under conditions that its supervising health professional considers safe. Encourage electronic visits.
- Permitted visitors should only visit their family members and should not have contact with other residents.
- Permitted visitors should cover their coughs and be educated on the importance of hand hygiene.
- Make sure the facility has plenty of hand washing products and that essential visitors have access to them.
- [See the Governor's executive order 1463 for details](#)

Social Gatherings and Events

Everyone attending events and gatherings, including weddings and funerals, should take extra precautions at this time, including:

- Maintain social distancing as much as possible. A separation of at least **6 feet** from another person is considered effective for infection control.
- **Indoor** gatherings must be limited to 20 people if social distancing can be maintained. When social distancing cannot be assured, indoor gatherings are limited to 50 people.
- **Outdoor** gatherings must be limited to 50 people if social distancing can be maintained. When social distancing cannot be assured, outdoor gatherings are limited to 100 people.
- Arena attendance is limited to 25% or less of full capacity.
- In addition to social distancing, wearing a mask or face covering in large gatherings is strongly recommended by the State Health Officer.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Look for sanitizers with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- If ill, do not attend any public event and call your physician or healthcare provider if needed.
- [See the Governor's executive order 1492 for details](#)

Planning for 4th of July Events

As we prepare to commemorate the 4th of July, follow the limits above on gathering sizes. The following guidance also applies to holiday events:

- In general, firework displays meeting the requirements of current Mississippi [Executive Orders](#) and other statutory requirements are allowed.
- MSDH recommends that [CDC guidelines](#) for outdoor groups and community events be followed to help maintain social distancing and limit disease transmission. [View the CDC guidelines »](#)
- It is strongly recommended that those watching fireworks displays remain in their automobiles and not interact with others outside of their vehicles. The limits on group sizes at outdoor gatherings does **not** include those who remain in their vehicles.

Church and Worship Services

Like any gathering, church services have the potential to spread COVID-19 infection if they are not resumed with suitable precautions. Guidelines have now been issued to help churches offer in-person services while minimizing the risk of disease transmission.

- [Governor's guidelines for resuming in-person worship services](#)
- [CDC recommendation and resources for community events](#)

Youth Sports

- All participants must be screened for symptoms of COVID-19
- Concessions must remain closed
- 100 person maximum per field, including fans
- Limit of 2 fans per player
- Fans outside of family group must maintain 6 feet of separation
- Bleachers shall be closed to fans
- Full information: Governor's orders [1491](#) and [1492](#)

Schools

The Mississippi Department of Education has issued COVID-19 guidelines for Mississippi schools:

- [Department of Education COVID-19 Guidelines](#) MDE
- [CDC Guidance for Schools and Childcare Administrators](#)

Child Care Facilities

The Mississippi State Department of Health has not recommended closing child care facilities at this time.

Child care facilities choosing to remain open should be mindful of hygiene and disinfection practices specific to schools and daycares:

- [MSDH Guidelines for Summer Camps and Overnight Camps During COVID-19](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Schools and Childcare Administrators](#)
- [CDC Guidance for School and Childcare Settings](#)

Businesses and Workplaces

Workplaces should be mindful of providing strong hygiene support and facilitating [social distancing](#) for the safety of their employees and patrons. Employees who are sick should stay at home, and employees should be checked daily for COVID-19 symptoms.

- All retail businesses, restaurants and bars must limit the number of customers to no greater than 50% capacity.
- Employees must wear masks or face coverings when in contact with the public.
- Businesses should take every measure to ensure social distancing and proper hand hygiene for customers.

- [Full requirements and measures for re-opening businesses: Governor's orders #1492](#)
- [CDC questions and answers on COVID-19 and safety in the workplace](#)
- [CDC guidance for grocery and retail food workers](#)
- [CDC Guidance for health protection in workplaces](#)
- [OSHA information on COVID-19 in the workplace](#)

Restaurants and bars

- All restaurants and bars shall limit the number of customers to no greater than 50% capacity
- All parties or groups must be separated by a minimum of 6 feet
- All employees must be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 daily
- All employees must wear a face covering when serving the public
- Governors' orders on re-opening restaurants: [1492](#), [1478](#) and [1496](#)

Funeral homes and mortuaries

MSDH has specific guidance for services of this type.

- [MSDH Guidance for Funeral Homes and Mortuaries](#)

State Agencies

- [MSDH Guidelines for State Agencies During COVID-19](#)
Social distancing and enhanced hygiene measures

Other Community Guidance

The CDC offers prevention, response and re-opening guidance for:

- [Colleges and universities](#)
- [First responders](#)
- [Households](#)
- [Homeless shelters](#)
- [People experiencing homelessness](#)
- [Event organizers](#)
- [Gatherings and community events](#)
- [Community and faith-based organizations](#)
- [Businesses and workplaces](#)
- [Parks and recreational facilities](#), including new information for [re-opening swimming pools and aquatic facilities](#)
- [Retirement communities and independent living](#)
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- [Shared and congregate housing](#)
- [Transportation and delivery](#)
- [Tribal Communities](#)
- [Healthcare facilities](#)
- [Schools and childcare administrators](#)
- [Flyer: Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission \(CDC\)](#), PDF

The CDC has guidance for cleaning rooms and buildings visited by those who have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

- [Cleaning and disinfection recommendations for schools, offices and other non-healthcare facilities](#) CDC

Information for Travelers

The CDC recommends that travelers avoid **all** nonessential travel (including cruise travel) to all global destinations due to the global pandemic and widespread transmission of COVID-19. **All** travelers returning from international travel are advised to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after returning home.

You may be contacted by the Mississippi State Department of Health if you have returned from traveling to an area with restrictions on entry to the US, traveled on a cruise, or traveled on a flight or ship with a confirmed COVID-19 case. We'll provide instructions on protective steps to take, including isolation at home.

- [More information for travelers from the CDC](#)

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