

Take charge of your health today. Be informed. Be involved.

Flattening the Curve

By now, you've probably heard a lot of people saying that we need to "flatten the curve" of COVID-19. The curve is how many people get infected over time. As noted in Ms. Bush's commentary, "flattening the curve" doesn't mean our region will have fewer cases overall. It means slowing down the number of cases each day.

Under normal conditions, Pittsburgh's hospitals have enough equipment and medicines to help people who have trouble breathing because of illness or injury. But if too many people get really sick at the same time, hospitals couldn't treat them all. That's why we want the infection curve to stay

low. Flattening the curve starts right now. We can do it by practicing regular handwashing, "social distancing" and staying close to home, if possible.

National and citywide states of emergency have been declared. Schools, churches and restaurants are closed. Authorities are canceling events and asking people to avoid large crowds.

When you are with other people, try to keep 3 to 6 feet between you. This is the distance that droplets could travel when people cough or sneeze without covering their mouths. (You should always cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze; use a tissue or your

elbow—not your hands.)

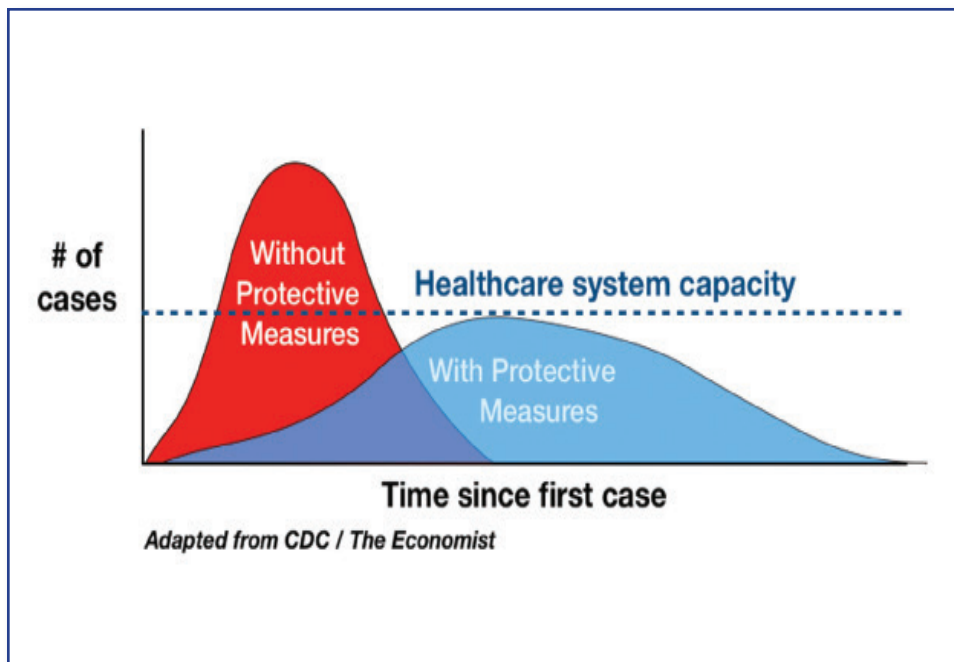
Even if you are healthy, you probably know people who are at higher risk of infection because they are over 60 years old or have a chronic illness like lupus, asthma, diabetes or heart disease. Ask your health care provider if you have questions about your specific situation.

Other tips:
Wash your hands frequently, especially after using the bathroom and before preparing food. Use soap and water and wash for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizers in a pinch. (<https://wash-ourlyrics.com/> is a website that will help. Just type the song and artist in the des-

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM COVID-19?
PRACTICE GOOD HEALTH HABITS

- WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN
- COVER COUGHS + SNEEZES
- DON'T TOUCH EYES/NOSE/MOUTH
- CLEAN SURFACES FREQUENTLY
- STAY HOME WHEN SICK
- AVOID SICK PEOPLE

pennsylvania DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



gnated area and the website pulls up the lyrics and places them, line-by-line, over a graphic that shows the best way to effectively wash your hands.)

Avoid touching your face, cover your cough and practice other routine precautions against infection.

Use surface disinfectants frequently on things you touch—telephones,

doorknobs, kitchen counters, faucets, keyboards and other fixtures.

Practice social distancing routinely—even if you're not infected yourself. This means staying home as much as possible, avoiding crowds unless absolutely necessary, maintaining 6 feet of distance between individuals when you can, not shaking hands, covering coughs, washing hands and

other similar social distancing measures.

You can be a role model for the community and help prevent the spread of infection.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines also give more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Resources during COVID-19 Shutdowns

Note: If you have a fever or cough or have any questions about your health, please call your primary care provider. If you do not have a primary care provider, please call the Allegheny County Health Department (412-247-7800). If you or someone you care for are in distress, please call 911.

Schools often provide critical meals during children's days. School closures can interrupt easy access to food. Here is a short list of food pantries in the city. We suggest calling first, if possible.

Northside Community Food Pantry
 412-323-1163 | 1601 Brighton Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15212 | Hours: 9:30 a.m.-noon on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday

The Squirrel Hill Food Pantry
 412-421-2708 | 828 Hazelwood Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15217 | Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Tuesday, Thursday 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:30-3 p.m. | Monday 5-7 p.m.

Oakland Community Pantry of Community Human Services (they have modified their flow to include waiting outside to be served one at a time) | 412-246-1615 | 370 Lawn Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 | Thursdays from 3-6 p.m. and Fridays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

 After Governor Tom Wolf closed all Early Head Start programs and pre-K through grade 12 schools in the Commonwealth, the United States Department of Agriculture gave the PA Department of Education permission to serve meals to all students onsite. **Pittsburgh Public Schools** notes "grab and go" meals will be available at all schools from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. until March 20. Folks are advised to go to the school closest to their homes. The district is working on a plan to

deliver to housing communities next week.

 Access to clothing and household items, including toiletries and snacks, can be found at two Free Stores in the region. These spaces allow shoppers to choose items at no cost:

Free Store 15014
 420 Braddock Avenue, Braddock, PA 15104 | 201-532-1722 | Thursdays from 3-6 p.m. and Fridays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Free Store Wilkinsburg
 619 Penn Avenue, Wilkinsburg, PA 15221 | 412-436-9836 | Open every Saturday from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

 Access to medical services with sliding-scale fees: Contact health care providers by phone before coming to a clinic or hospital, if you meet the following criteria: symptoms like fever, cough or shortness of breath; travel to countries with coronavirus alerts within 14 days of symptom onset; or contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 within 14 days of symptom onset.

(Northside) **Northview Heights Clinic**
 412-322-7500 | 525 Mount Pleasant Road | 15214

(Hill District) **Hilltop Community Health Center**
 412-431-3520 | 317 Climax Street | 15210

(East Liberty) **East End Community Health Center**
 412-404-4000 | 1117 N. Negley Avenue | 15206

(Homewood) **Alma Illery Medical Center**
 412-244-4700 | 7227 Hamilton Avenue | 15208

Comcast is offering two months free to new Internet Essentials customers in response to recent and anticipated emergency measures associated with COVID-19. It is also increasing the speed of the program to 25 Mbps downloads and 3 Mbps uploads for all new and existing customers. Visit <https://www.internetessentials.com/covid19> for more details.

 Think about identifying and

asking a friend, family member or coworker to check in on you with regard to your safety and support needs should you have to quarantine yourself at home.

We also know that isolating at home is not safe for everyone. Know that supports like the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** are available by phone at 1-800-799-7233.

 Your mental health is critical during the time of preparedness. The **Mayo Clinic** suggests connecting to supports, reading, getting outside or exercising inside, laughing, listening to music and dancing, practicing yoga at home, keeping a journal and managing intake of social media and news. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** suggest calling the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Hotline—1-800-985-5990 or text mental health experts by typing the message "TalkWithUs" to the number 66746.

 Note that spiritual places are also working around the clock to

maintain support and a sense of community. Check in with your house of faith as recent updates include movements to web-based services and changes to their programs.

United Way's PA 2-1-1 Southwest is ready to help people facing difficulties. Its resource navigators can help connect individuals and families with food pantries, health care services, tax prep assistance, utility and eviction prevention assistance and more. Those seeking help should dial 2-1-1, text their zip code to 898-211, or visit PA211sw.org.

Financial relief resources:

PNC is prepared to offer assistance, as needed, to affected customers through a range of measures. Should you, as a current PNC customer, encounter hardship as a result of COVID-19, call 1-888-762-2265 (7 a.m.-10 p.m. | Monday-Friday; 8 a.m.-5 p.m. EST, Saturday and Sunday).

PWSA and Duquesne Light will discontinue water and electricity cutoffs.

PWSA's waiver will remain in place until May 31.

Duquesne Light's waiver will remain in place until May 1.

Online resources:
www.cdc.gov
 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continue to serve as a center for national messaging and updates on COVID-19.

www.naacp.org
 The National Association of Colored People continues to update the public on the COVID-19 situation.

www.achd.gov
 The Allegheny County Health Department is providing up-to-date information and guidance for the region.

HOW DO I PREPARE?
CREATE A HOME EMERGENCY KIT

- NON-PERISHABLE FOOD
- BOTTLED WATER
- MEDICATIONS
- FLASHLIGHT + EXTRA BATTERIES
- FIRST AID KIT
- WARM CLOTHING
- BABY SUPPLIES
- PET SUPPLIES