

# Relaxed Stay-at-Home Restrictions: Guidance for COVID-19 High-Risk Populations



As we “flatten the curve” of COVID-19 infections, many states, including Missouri, are moving to re-open businesses and relax stay-at-home restrictions. For many, this is welcome news and a necessary step to restore our economy and society. During this transition time, everyone must remember COVID-19 still remains in Missouri, the US, and throughout the globe. It is imperative that everyone do their part to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by continuing to social distance as much as possible, practice good hand hygiene frequently, and stay home when you are ill—even as businesses re-open and people return to work. These steps will be even more important for those at higher risk for severe illness and poor outcomes of COVID-19.

## Who is high risk?

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), individuals at higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19 infections need to [take extra precautions](#) even as places begin to re-open. Those needing to take extra precautions include:

- People 65 and older and those living in nursing homes or long-term care centers
- People with underlying medical conditions, including:
  - Diabetes
  - Heart disease or serious heart condition
  - Moderate to severe asthma
  - HIV
  - Chronic kidney disease (undergoing dialysis)
  - Liver disease
  - Immunocompromised (cancer treatment, smoking, bone or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, etc.)
- People with disabilities

Disability alone may not increase your risk for getting COVID-19 or having severe illness. However, adults with disabilities are three times more likely than adults without disabilities to have underlying medical conditions.
- Pregnant people

Pregnant people do not appear to have a higher risk of contracting COVID-19. However, pregnant people have changes in their bodies that may increase their risk of some infection. In addition, they have also had a higher risk of severe illness when infected with viruses from the same family as COVID-19 or influenza.
- People experiencing homelessness.

Homeless services are often provided in congregate settings. These settings can facilitate the spread of infection. In addition, many homeless also have underlying medical conditions.
- Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups

Racial and Ethnic minority groups often have higher rates of underlying medical conditions, have reduced access to care, work in essential industries, and often live in densely populated areas.

## What precautions should I take if I am high risk?

It is imperative that you take extra precautions as your community re-opens, including:

- Stay at home as much as possible if you fit into one or more of the high-risk categories or you have a moderate to severe underlying condition or it is not well controlled.  
Continue to telework if possible; avoid large crowds; continue to maintain six feet of social distancing as much as possible in all situations.
- Avoid people who are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19, including family members.
- Continue to take your medications as prescribed and work to keep underlying medical conditions controlled.
- Seek ongoing and emergency care for any underlying medical conditions.  
Delayed care can result in more acute illness and poor outcomes.
- Clean your hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as cups, utensils, and towels.
- Stock up on groceries and medical supplies—including prescription medications—to reduce the need to go out.
- When you do venture out, maintain six feet of space between yourself and others as much as possible and wear a cloth face covering or surgical mask.
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel.



## Where do I get more information about high-risk groups?

Visit the CDC's [Higher Risk Populations](#) and [Extra Precautions](#) webpages to learn more about specific groups and targeted precautions. As we adapt to our “new normal” we all have a personal responsibility to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and to protect ourselves, friends, and families.

[www.Health.mo.gov/Coronavirus](http://www.Health.mo.gov/Coronavirus)  
[www.ShowMeStrong.mo.gov](http://www.ShowMeStrong.mo.gov)

