



Clinic for Special Children

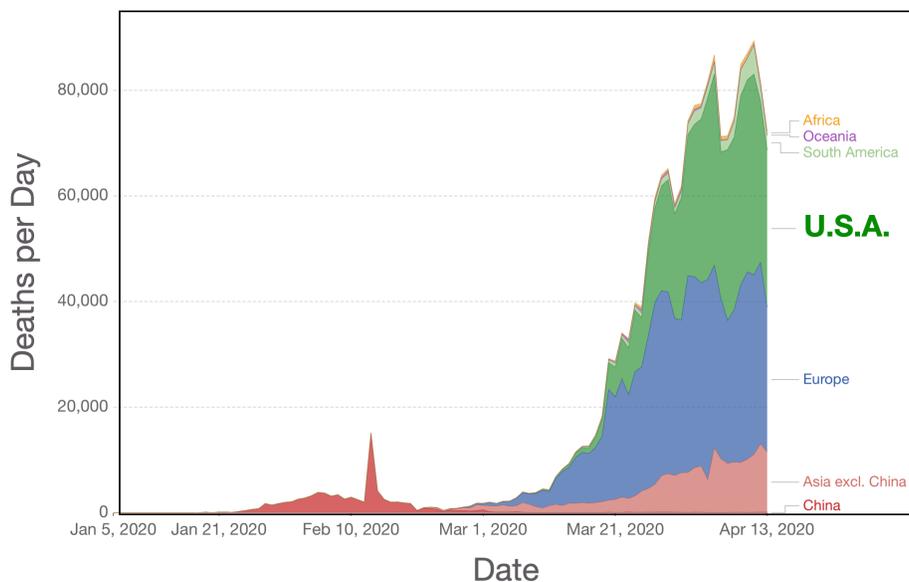
535 Bunker Hill Road, PO Box 128, Strasburg, PA 17579 T 717.687.9407 F 717.687.9237

April 14th, 2020

Dear Friends,

Out of growing concern about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Clinic for Special Children (CSC) circulated an open letter to the community on March 20th, 2020, outlining dangers of the novel coronavirus and measures to control its spread. Many worrisome predictions about the pandemic have come to pass, and COVID-19 continues to claim the lives of people young and old, in all communities, and in all nations.

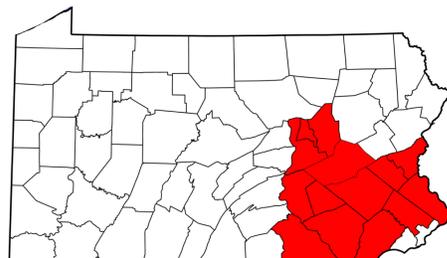
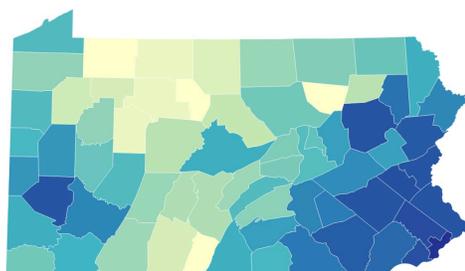
The death rate from COVID-19 is highest in the United States (**green shading**), where the number of U.S. citizens infected **continues to double every four days**. Many U.S. hospitals now face critical shortages of life-saving equipment (mechanical ventilators) and protective gear (masks, gloves, sanitizer), forcing doctors to make painful life and death decisions about how to ration limited medical resources.



Addressing Your Questions and Concerns: In our conversations with families and community members, we receive many important questions while also learning about sources of misinformation. In this follow up to our March 20th letter, we address your most *frequently asked questions* with reliable information. In this time of uncertainty, we strongly recommend you rely only on guidance from trusted sources, such as the **U.S. Center for Disease Control, National Institutes of Health, World Health Organization**, or your state's **governor** and **chief health officer**.

“Am I safe from COVID-19 if I live in a rural community?”

NO. Large coastal cities were hit earliest and hardest by COVID-19, but infections spread in waves from these areas into rural communities of Pennsylvania and elsewhere. The map below (current as of April 13th) shows confirmed COVID-19 cases in Pennsylvania (*left panel, blue shading*), where the number of infected people increased from **185** to more than **25,000** in just three weeks. High infection rates are seen in many rural Southeastern counties, *including those most densely populated with Anabaptists (right panel, red shading)*.





“Does ‘the flu’ make me immune to COVID-19?”

NO. When COVID-19 first appeared in late 2019, few if any humans on Earth were immune. Infections by the influenza virus (“the flu”) or other ‘seasonal’ viruses cause a similar type of illness (fever, cough, chest tightness), but provide no protection against COVID-19, **which is far more deadly.** If you already had a “flu” this season, do not assume you are immune to COVID-19.

“Do all hand sanitizers work the same to kill COVID-19?”

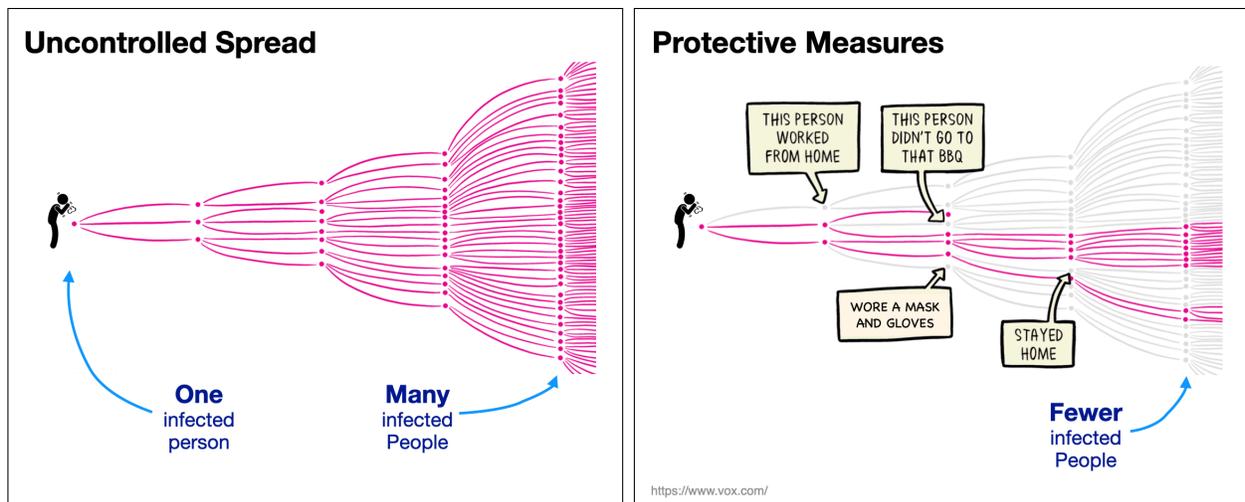
NO. The best practice is to *wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds*, especially after being in a public place, using the bathroom, or before preparing food. Hand sanitizers also work well, but must contain 60– 95% alcohol and be used properly: apply to the palm of one hand and rub thoroughly over both hands and between fingers *until the sanitizer dries*, which takes about 20 seconds. Most ‘natural’, organic, and alcohol-free hand cleansers do **not** kill COVID-19.

“Do all household cleaners work the same to kill COVID-19?”

NO. Bleach effectively kills COVID-19 and can be used to clean surfaces in your home. To prepare a bleach-based cleaning solution: mix *5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water, or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.* If you are using commercial cleaning products, stick with brand names (Clorox, Lysol). Many natural and organic cleaning products are ineffective against COVID-19.

“Is it safe to gather with people who don’t seem sick?”

NO. A person infected with COVID-19 typically remains without symptoms for **2–14 days** while unknowingly passing the infection to other people, who in turn infect more people, and so on. Unchecked, this allows COVID-19 to quickly spread from one person to thousands (*left panel* below). **Protective measures** control the spread of infection and save lives (*right panel* below).



“Can I get tested for COVID-19?”

MAYBE. It would be ideal if everyone could be tested for COVID-19. However, there are a limited number of tests, so they are prioritized for people who are at highest risk to die from the virus or spread it to others. The U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends testing be prioritized as follows:

- **Top Priority:** Sick hospitalized patients and healthcare workers in contact with them.
- **Second Priority:** People *with symptoms* who live in chronic care facilities, are 65 or older, or have a chronic illness.
- **Lower Priority:** Emergency first responders *with any symptoms* or people with mild symptoms in high risk zones.
- **Not a Priority:** The CDC currently recommends **against** testing people who do not have symptoms.

Most medical centers have special COVID-19 testing and treatment protocols in place. If you have symptoms of **fever, cough, and/or breathing difficulty**, call your primary care doctor or nearby hospital for guidance.



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“Is there a cure for COVID-19?”

NO. There is currently no effective natural or medical treatment for COVID-19. Rely on protective measures:

- Do not leave your home unless it is *absolutely necessary*.
- If you must leave home, wear a face mask and gloves and stay at least six feet from others in public.
- Until the pandemic runs its course, respect government recommendations to avoid congregating *for any reason* (e.g., church service, wedding, family gathering, school, non-essential business).
- Clean and disinfect your home with appropriate cleansers each day.
- Don't shake hands; avoid direct contact with commonly touched objects (hand towels, children's toys).
- Clean your hands frequently and correctly; use soap and water or hand sanitizer (60–95% alcohol).
- Try not to touch your face.



The daily infection rate appears to be peaking in the U.S., which means there is an end in sight. I encourage you to be patient and remain disciplined in the effort to protect yourself, your loved ones, and the global human community. Remember: precautionary measures and social distancing **only work if everyone does their part**; this is our time to stand together with caring people everywhere.

Yours Sincerely,

Kevin A. Strauss, M.D.
Medical Director, Clinic for Special Children

DATA SOURCES: <https://abcnews.go.com/>; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>; <https://ourworldindata.org/charts/>; <https://www.vox.com/>;
<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>