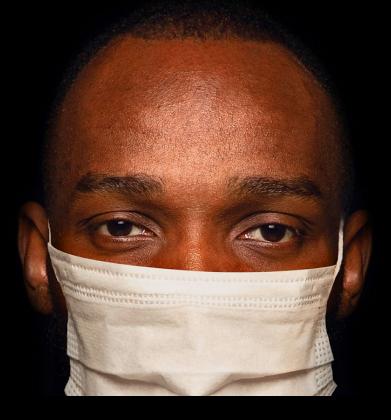# I am

ALIVE &
IN COLOR

WINNING THE BATTLE
AGAINST COVID-19

TREATING COVID-19

Know Your Rights & Your Options

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Know the Status of The State

#FACT - COVID-19 cases and positivity rates are back on the rise in Fulton County

- **Up to 40% of people who have COVID-19 are estimated to be asymptomatic.** That means they could be walking around like everything's cool because they don't have symptoms, when in fact they are highly contagious.

- **Fulton County is leading GA** in County Case Rates at **35,149 cumulative cases** of the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). **With as much as 23% of those cases** being **asymptomatic, there were more new cases of COVID-19 in Fulton Co. in the past 2 weeks than the previous two weeks.**

#FACT - Black and Hispanic populations are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19

- **GA is nearing 433,000 cases and over 8,955 deaths.**

- **The number of deaths for every 100k in the Black population remains high at 102 compared to deaths for the White population at 77. The number of deaths for every 100k in the Hispanic population is 50.**

- **Positivity rates continue to creep up - As of November 13, the positivity rate is 5% compared to what it was one month ago (w/o 10/13) at 3.5%**

Know how the COVID-19 virus spreads

- **Respiratory Droplets**: The virus is mainly spread through the respiratory droplets of an infected person via direct contact - e.g. sneezing, speaking close to you, or coughing. Though not conclusively demonstrated, it is suspected that airborne transmission may be possible - particularly if indoors.

- **Contact With The Virus on Surfaces**: You can also get infected if you touch a surface that has the virus on it, and then touch your mouth, nose, or eyes. But the virus doesn't last very long on surfaces.

- **Asymptomatic & Presymptomatic Transmission**: It's possible to have no symptoms (asymptomatic) or very mild symptoms and still infect someone else. 40% of people who have COVID are asymptomatic.

Beating COVID-19: Preventative Behaviors and Vaccines

#FACT - Face coverings can reduce the risk of infection to the wearer by 65%[1]

- A fist bump transfers about 90% less bacteria than a handshake[2]

#FACT - Areas with no social distancing see 35x the amount of coronavirus spread.[3]

- Social distancing policies can reduce the daily increase of new coronavirus cases by as much as 9%

#FACT - Slightly more than half of all respondents (55%) say they'd be willing to take a vaccine if one becomes available. Only 29% of AA in Fulton Co. say they're willing to take a vaccine if one becomes available.[4]

#FACT - According to WHO, <u>vaccines prevented at least 10 million deaths</u> between 2010 and 2015, and many millions more lives were protected from illness[5]

Adopt Preventative Behaviors

Practice the 3 W's
There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. In addition to avoiding gatherings of 10 or more, public health officials recommend the 3 W's:

- **Wear** a face covering.
- **Wash** your hands often (for at least 20 seconds) or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Don't touch your face or mask until you're able to clean your hands.
- **Wait** at least 6 feet from any person not from your household, and a greater distance if the person is not wearing a mask (social distancing)

Wear a face covering every time you leave the house
The most effective habit to develop in combating COVID-19 is **<u>mask-wearing</u>**. They should be used when you are in close proximity with a sick person or a person you do not live with.

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[1] https://www.ucdavis.edu/coronavirus/news/your-mask-cuts-own-risk-65-percent/
[2] https://www.apic.org/Resource_/TinyMceFileManager/Fist_bump_article_AJIC_August_2014.pdf
[3] https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00608
[4] COVID-19 Circle of Trust Survey: Addressing Perceptions, Attitudes, and Behaviors of Fulton Co. GA. Residents -- Sept-Nov 2020
[5] https://www.who.int/publications/10-year-review/vaccines/en/

- **To wear a mask correctly:**
    - Wash your hands before putting on your mask
    - Put it over your nose and mouth
    - Secure it under your chin
    - Make sure it fits snugly against the sides of your face and make sure you can breathe easily.
- **To take off your mask correctly:**
    - Touch only the ear loops or ties
    - Fold the outside corners together
- **To clean your mask**
    - Wash your mask with warm water and soap by hand or use a washing machine
- **Where to get a mask:**
    - Free facemasks are available at the City of Atlanta's homeless partners' facilities, shelters, and food pick up locations.
    - MARTA's station agents and Transit Ambassadors wearing 'red' MARTA shirts are also providing free masks to customers from 7am-11am on weekdays, and on weekend/weeknights, depending on ridership.

Avoid Large Gatherings & Be Conscious of The Risk
Follow county and state guidelines for group gatherings. Indoor gatherings put you at a much greater risk of getting a COVID-19 infection.

- Fulton County: COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions
- State of Georgia: CDC COVID-19 Guidance
- Consult the MyCOVID Risk app to assess the risk of attending specific events

Vaccines and COVID-19
Get your Flu Shot
Everyone over the age of 6 months should get a flu vaccine. A flu vaccine protects vulnerable populations and reduces flu illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths. It protects the person getting vaccinated and the people around
- Getting the flu vaccine could prevent you from having COVID-19 and the flu at the same time.
- Getting a flu vaccine will help keep you and your loved ones out of the hospital and help doctors focus on people with COVID-19 and other serious illnesses.
- The only types of people who are strongly discouraged from getting a flu shot are children under 6 months in age, those who have life-threatening allergies to the flu vaccine. Talk to your doctor before getting a flu shot if you have any egg allergies, if you've ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), or if you are generally not feeling well.

Visit Fulton County Board of Health's Immunization webpage for more information on where to get a flu shot.

Understand the Vaccine Approval Process
Most countries have strict guidelines about vaccine testing, which include trial phases for efficiency and safety. In the US, the FDA is responsible for approving and regulating vaccines through a multi-step process that consists of viable safeguards. The FDA Has provided numerous sources of information to provide insight into the approval process:

- Vaccine Development 101
- Emergency Use Authorization for Vaccines Explained
- The Path for a COVID-19 Vaccine from Research to Emergency Use Authorization (PDF-723KB)
- FDA & Vaccinate Your Family Talk COVID with Minority Community Leaders

Finally, **The National Medical Association**, the **largest and oldest group of Black physicians** in the **country has formed a vaccine oversight committee** to vet the federal review of companies' vaccines. To help address questions and concerns about efficacy, safety, and allocation of COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics, a resolution was introduced by former National Medical Association (NMA) President Dr. Rodney Hood and passed by the House of Delegates in August 4, 2020 to establish a COVID-19 taskforce. The taskforce includes NMA physicians who belong to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Infectious Disease Society of America, Pediatric Infectious Disease Society, and the CDC Health Equity Workgroup.

Recognize the Symptoms of COVID-19
Symptoms are mild for most people who are infected with the coronavirus and will likely appear 2-14 days after being exposed to the virus (on average 5-6 days). The most common symptoms include the following:
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills (sometimes combined with shaking)
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea and stomach problems

Use the **CDC Coronavirus Self-Checker** to assess your health if you think you've contracted COVID-19

Monitor your health and contact your health provider. Telehealth COVID-19 screenings and follow-up care are available, affordable, and convenient.
- The Augusta University ExpressCare App allows you to connect with a medical clinician via video, chat, or phone, including a hotline for those without internet access (706-721-1852). *Y se habla Español*.

Know the symptoms of COVID-19 in Elderly and the Young
The Elderly
Keep an eye out for specific symptoms of COVID-19 in people age 65 and older. Symptoms can range from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Typical and atypical symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Underlying chronic illnesses can also mask or interfere with signs of infection.

- **FEVER**: In some cases, seniors and people of any age with underlying health conditions may have symptoms that are not typically seen in others. They may also take longer than others to develop fever and other symptoms. In seniors, normal body temperature can be lower than in younger adults. Be aware that a single reading higher than 100°F (37.8°C), multiple readings above 99°F (37.2°C), or a rise in temperature greater than 2°F (1.1°C) above the patient's normal (baseline) temperature may be a sign of infection.

- **CONFUSION**: Seniors may seem "off" — not acting like themselves — after being infected by the coronavirus. They may seem unusually apathetic or confused. They may become dizzy and fall. They may seem profoundly disoriented and unable to speak.

- **FATIGUE**: Other signs of an infection may include drowsiness and lower than normal activity levels. They may sleep more than usual. Sometimes, seniors stop speaking or simply collapse. They could appear incontinent.

- **LOSS OF APPETITE:** They may stop eating, leading to weakness and dehydration. This may contribute to falls and injuries.

The Young
According to the COVID-19 study by the American Academy of Pediatrics, about 11% of patients with COVID-19 are children (age range 0-20--varied by state). Children make up 1% to

3.6% of total reported COVID-19, hospitalizations. Between 0.6% and 6.9% of all child COVID-19 cases resulted in hospitalization.

Babies under 1 year old might be more likely to have severe illness from COVID-19. In babies, children and teens, regardless of age, those with the underlying medical conditions might be at risk of severe illness compared to other children. This list does not include every underlying condition that might increase the risk of severe illness in children.

- Asthma or chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Genetic, neurologic, or metabolic conditions
- Heart disease since birth
- Immunosuppression (weakened immune system due to certain medical conditions or being on medications that weaken the immune system)
- Medical complexity (children with multiple chronic conditions that affect many parts of the body who are often dependent on technology and other significant supports for daily life)
- Obesity

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 in babies, children and teens are fever and cough. They may also have any of the following signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19.

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Stomachache
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle or body aches
- Poor appetite or poor feeding, especially in babies under 1 year old

Do not delay seeking emergency care for your child because you are worried about the spread of COVID-19. Emergency departments have infection prevention plans to protect you and your child from getting sick with COVID-19 if your child needs emergency care.

If your child is showing any of these *emergency warning signs, seek emergency medical care immediately.

- Trouble breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest that doesn't go away
- New confusion
- Can't wake up or stay awake when not tired
- Bluish lips or face

Know When to Get Tested

1. **Get tested if you have high exposure to people outside of your home**
   a. If you are an essential worker or have high exposure to people outside of your immediate household, you should get tested regularly, even if you don't have symptoms.

2. **Get tested if you have been in close contact with someone with a COVID-19 infection** - If you have been in close contact with someone with a COVID-19 infection, or suspect that you may have been in contact, you should get tested even if you don't have symptoms. **Close Contact**:
   a. **Caring for a sick person** with COVID or **Living in the same of household** as a sick person with COVID - unable to maintain 6 feet
   b. **Being within 6 feet of a sick person** with COVID for a **cumulative total of 15 minutes** or more over a 24 hr period, OR
   c. **Being in direct contact with secretions/respiratory droplets** from a sick person with COVID, for any amount of time (being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.)

3. **Get Tested If you experience symptoms of COVID-19**

Know How & Where to Get Tested for FREE

With the help of CORE, Fulton County & The Fulton County Board of Health have greatly expanded testing capacity and reduced wait time for results to an average of 1-2 days. **Testing is available for free** through, CORE, Fulton County, and the Department of Public Health. No insurance or ID needed. Testing is available to anyone. *Y se habla Español*.

- Getting tested:
  - Drive-Thru & Walk-Up Testing is provided by CORE and the Fulton County Board of Health
  - Schedule a COVID-19 test online

- Call 404-613-8150; 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. on weekdays and 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Saturdays

- Getting your results:
    - Test results will be emailed to you if you provided an address when you registered
    - You may also email fcboh.covid@dph.ga.gov with your name and date of birth
    - Call 404-613- 7295; Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

- Getting retested:
    - If you test positive, only retest 3 months after your initial test

Follow Safe Practices While Waiting For Testing Results

Even if you don't have symptoms (asymptomatic), you can still pass the virus to someone else. So, make sure to wear a mask and keep a 6 ft distance from others. It might be difficult or feel like it's too much of a hassle, but it's important to try not to infect loved ones. Each person is different and even a younger, healthy person could get severely ill and end up in the hospital.

If you test negative for COVID-19, you probably were not infected at the time your sample was collected. This does not mean you will not get sick.
- A negative test result only means that you did not have COVID-19 at the time of testing or that your sample was collected too early in your infection.
    - **It may take some time after being exposed for enough virus to be detectable on a test.** Experts recommend that you self-isolate and wait at least 7 days before getting a test, wear a mask, follow hand hygiene, and limit the number of people you come in contact with while we are waiting to get a test.
- You could also be exposed to COVID-19 after the test and then get infected and spread the virus to others
- If you show symptoms later, you may need another test to determine if you are infected with COVID-19.

If you test positive from a viral test, it is likely you have the disease. The accuracy of people who test positive but do not have the disease is quite low. If you test positive for COVID-19, abide by the following practices:
- Stay at home for 10 days from when your symptoms started.
- Keep away from people in your household as much as possible, wear a mask and follow hand hygiene practices.
- Check your temperature twice a day and watch your symptoms.

- If your symptoms worsen - severe cough, fever, shortness of breath, seek medical care immediately.

Know When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention

There are 5 different categories of severity in illness for those who have contracted COVID-19, the criteria sometimes overlap:
- Asymptomatic/Presymptomatic: you fall into this category if have no symptoms, even if you test positive
- Mild: various symptoms of COVID-19 without shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or abnormal chest x-rays
- Moderate: evidence of lower respiratory disease by clinical assessment or x-rays
- Severe: Individuals who have respiratory frequency >30 breaths per minute
- Critical: respiratory failure, septic shock, and/or multiple organ failure

COVID-19 treatment is only provided in hospitals, but consultation with a doctor is possible via telehealth services. Look for emergency warning signs* for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:
- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19. Click here for the latest information about symptoms from the Centers for Disease Control.

If you do not experience any of these symptoms and are positive for COVID, continue to:
- Rest
- Stay hydrated
- Get proper nutrition
- Isolate from others

Treating COVID-19: Know your Rights

If you lose your job and meet the criteria, you can still access health insurance
- Losing employer-based insurance coverage is a 'qualifying life event' that allows someone 30 days to either sign up on a spouse's employer-sponsored health insurance plan or apply for insurance under the Affordable Care Act.
- Interim assistance (IA) provides temporary assistance until work resumes or a request for permanent disability is approved. In order to receive IA, a medical provider must confirm that the disability will last at least 3 months.

If you get COVID-19 and meet the criteria, you are entitled to Paid Time Off
- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19 through Dec 31, 2020. Employees are entitled to take up to 10 days of paid sick leave and up to 12 weeks of emergency paid family leave for reasons related to COVID-19.

Access Affordable Care

- Consider seeing a medical professional virtually. Telehealth COVID-19 screenings and follow-up care are available, affordable, and convenient.
- The Augusta University ExpressCare App allows you to connect with a medical clinician via video, chat, or phone, including a hotline for those without internet access (706-721-1852). *Y se habla Español.*
- Fulton County Health department provides affordable healthcare services.
- If someone gets sick and is uninsured but meets the criteria to qualify for Medicaid, it is possible to see a doctor and get Medicaid retroactively. Contact your local Georgia Division of Family & Children Services office for more information.
- Regardless of your documented status, you can seek services at community health centers and Grady Memorial Hospital at a reduced cost or free of charge (depending on income).

Treating COVID-19: Therapeutics and Treatment Methods

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has developed and regularly updates Treatment Guidelines to help guide healthcare providers caring for patients with COVID-19, including when clinicians might consider using one of the products under an EUA. Currently, there are several approaches for treating patients with severe COVID-19 who are being cared for in the hospital. In studies, some drugs have shown some benefit in reducing the severity of illness or risk of death by:

- *Slowing the virus. Antiviral medications reduce the ability of the virus to multiply and spread through the body.*
  - Remdesivir - for certain patients who are hospitalized with COVID-19. Remdesivir is

given to patients by infusion through their veins.

- ***Reducing an overactive immune response*. In patients with severe COVID-19, the body's immune system may overreact to the threat of the virus, worsening the disease. This can cause damage to the body's organs and tissues. Some treatments can help reduce this overactive immune response.**
  - Dexamethasone
  - is a steroid medication, similar to a natural hormone produced by the body. The NIH Treatment Guidelines recommend dexamethasone, or a similar medication, to prevent or reduce injury to the body for some hospitalized patients with severe COVID-19. Dexamethasone is recommended for patients who need supplemental oxygen.
- ***Treating complications*.** The virus that causes COVID-19 can damage the heart, blood vessels, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, and gastrointestinal organs. It also can cause other complications. Depending on the complications, additional treatments might be used for severely ill hospitalized patients, such as blood thinners to prevent or treat blood clots.
- ***Supporting the body's immune function.*** Antibodies from patients who have recovered from COVID-19 (convalescent plasma) or antibodies manufactured to treat COVID-19 (like monoclonal antibodies) can attach to parts of the virus. This could help the immune system recognize and respond more effectively to the virus, but currently the NIH Treatment Guidelines find there is not enough evidence to recommend these treatments.
- ***Relieving symptoms and supporting the body's natural defenses*.**
  - Taking medications, like acetaminophen or ibuprofen, can reduce fever.
  - Drinking water or receiving intravenous fluids can help patients stay hydrated.
  - Getting plenty of rest can help the body fight the virus.

Other products are being studied as potential treatments for COVID-19. Information about these ongoing studies can be found at ClinicalTrials.gov