

## DRCC COVID-19 UPDATE--Concise: December 2020

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*This update was prepared by the Coronavirus Advisory Subcommittee for the Elders of Damascus Road Community Church. It represents the best information we have at this time. The intent is informational and specific situations should be addressed with the medical provider.*

### Key Messages

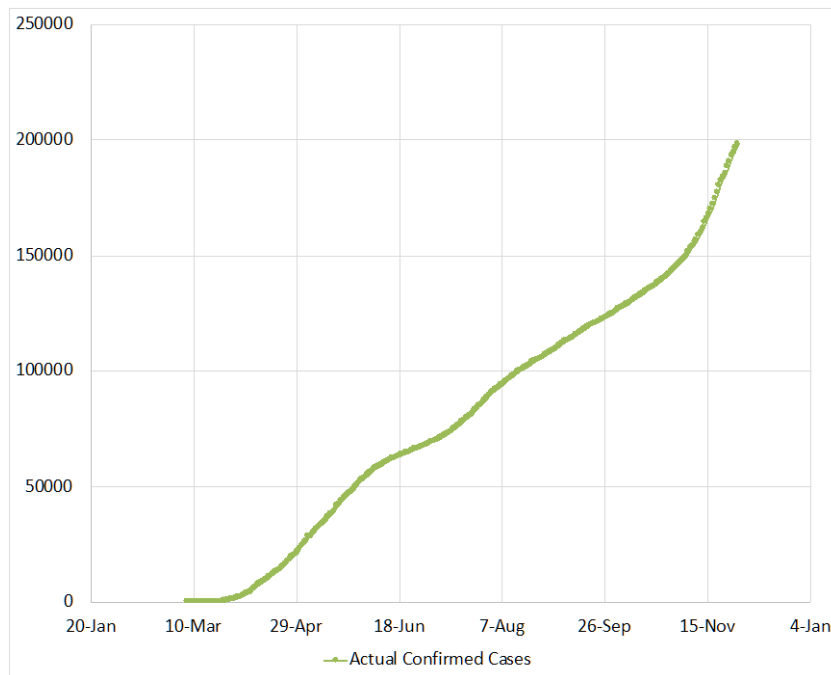
- COVID-19 disease is increasing in Maryland and across the US – continued precautions are important for personal health and conservation of healthcare capacity.
- Effective vaccinations are becoming available in December, and widely around April 2021. Widespread vaccination should enable more normal lifestyles in mid-late 2021.
- Ivermectin is showing promise for COVID-19 prophylaxis and therapy.

This update targets persons interested in personal health. An expanded summary targeted to healthcare professionals and policy members is available.<sup>1</sup>

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### Maryland Update

COVID-19 disease prevalence accelerated in Maryland through November (*Figure 1*).



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dropbox.com/s/i1xopbzgdtawgd/202012covid-19%20update.docx?dl=0>

Figure 1: Maryland COVID-19 Total Confirmed Cases.

Further breakdown of COVID-19 infections in Maryland counties near DRCC are presented in Table 1.

County	Confirmed Cases	Deaths
Montgomery	34,159	909
Howard	8,343	139
Frederick	7,123	142
Carrol	3,466	133
Total	53,091	1323

Table 1: COVID-19 Report for Maryland, 29 Nov 2020.

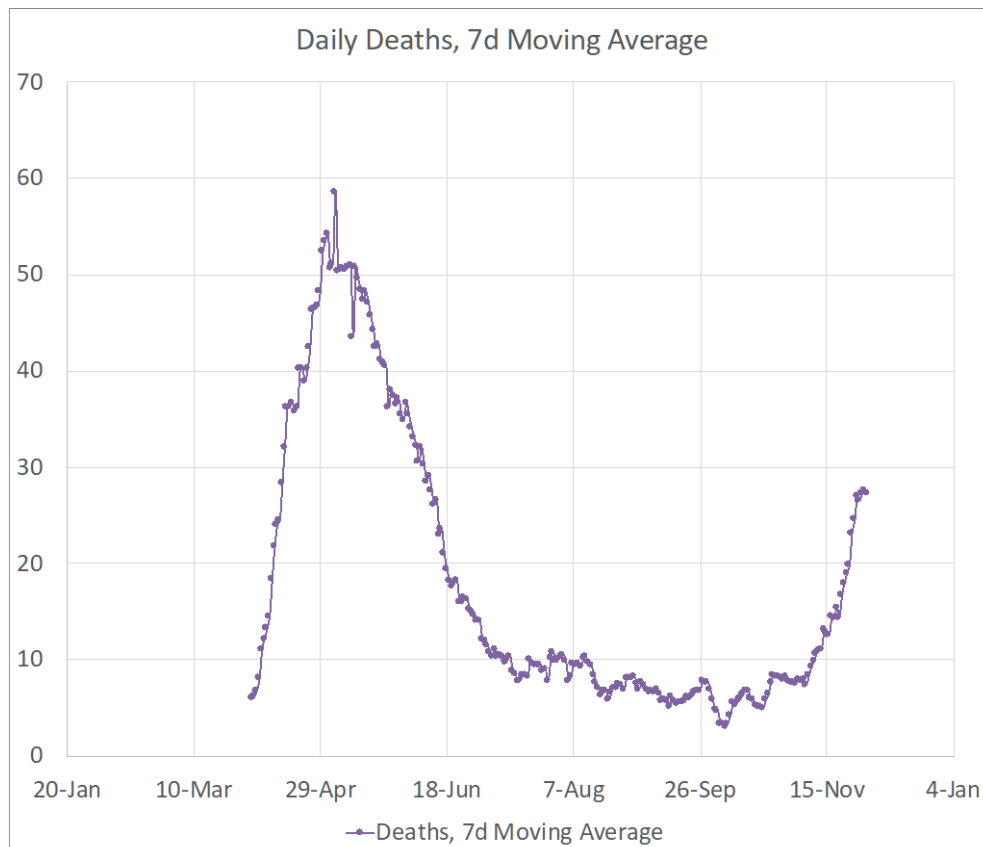


Figure 2: COVID-19 daily mortality – 7 Day Moving Averages.

Figure 2 demonstrates daily reported deaths are increasing along with infections in November.

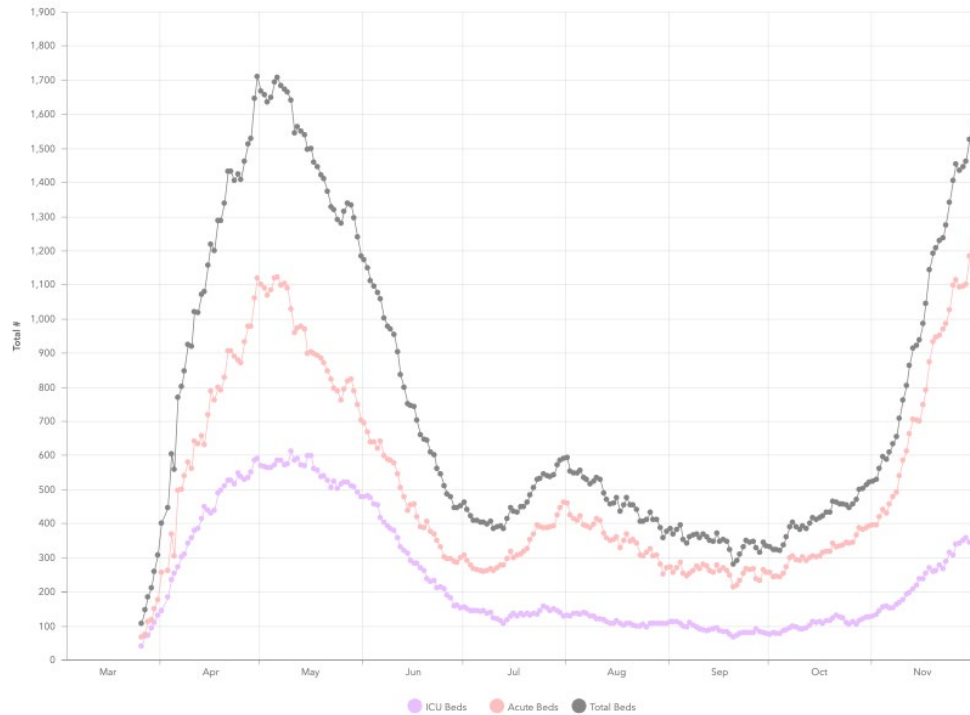


Figure 3: COVID-19 Hospitalizations in Maryland. Purple: ICU Beds; Pink: Acute Beds; Gray, Total Beds<sup>2</sup>

Hospitalization trends (Figure 3,4) also indicate a significant increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations from during November reaching 60% ICU capacity in Maryland.

Estimating the number of infected persons in Maryland is challenging due to limited. Presently, Maryland's Case Fatality Rate, or COVID-19 Fatalities/Confirmed Cases is about 2-3%<sup>3</sup>, in-line with other estimates.<sup>4</sup> Maryland's Infected Fatality Rate, or COVID-19 Fatalities / Infected persons is approximately 0.1-0.4%, using October estimates from the Center for Evidence Based Medicine<sup>5</sup> and the CDC.<sup>6</sup> From this, we can estimate that there are between 40,000 and 200,000 infections active in Maryland, or, between 0.6% and 3% of the population. Governor Hogan instituted additional measures to slow COVID-19 surge beginning 20 November closing restaurants and bars at 10 PM and limiting capacity at retail and religious organizations to 50% of capacity.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov>

<sup>3</sup> Personal estimate from Maryland health data.

<sup>4</sup> <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/mortality>

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic)

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/library/covid19/112420\\_covidupdate.html](https://www.cdc.gov/library/covid19/112420_covidupdate.html)

<sup>7</sup> <https://governor.maryland.gov/2020/11/17/to-fight-covid-19-surge-governor-hogan-announces-hospital-surge-measures-statewide-capacity-restrictions/>

Persons with certain existing conditions should be especially careful:<sup>8</sup>

- Age over 50 years
- Cancer
- Kidney disease
- Respiratory disease
- Heart disease
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Immune dysfunction

Approximately 40% of persons infected with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can infect others. In fact, CDC estimates that half of COVID-19 infections are transmitted from persons with no symptoms.<sup>9</sup> Since one cannot easily identify infectious persons, one should practice precautions with everyone outside of their immediate social circle.

Precautions to minimize COVID-19 risk include:

1. *Practice hand hygiene*
2. *Use a mask in the presence of others*
3. *Maintain social distancing.* Meeting out of doors is 300 times safer than meeting in doors. Avoid crowds indoors.
4. *Consider supplements:*<sup>10</sup>
  - a. Vitamin D3, 400-3000 IU/day
  - b. Vitamin C, 1000 mg 2x/day
  - c. Quercetin, 250 mg/day
  - d. Zinc, 50 mg/day
  - e. B-Complex multi-vitamin
  - f. Melatonin<sup>11</sup>, 6 mg before bedtime; assess side effects before use<sup>12</sup>
  - g. Ivermectin (by prescription and consultation with healthcare provider, see below and the I-MASK Protocol<sup>13,14</sup>)
5. *Avoid higher-risk venues*

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/planning-scenarios.html>

<sup>10</sup> <https://covid19criticalcare.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FLCCC-I-MASK-Protocol-v5-2020-11-28.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7405774/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/melatonin-side-effects/faq-20057874>

<sup>13</sup> <https://covid19criticalcare.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FLCCC-I-MASK-Protocol-v5-2020-11-28-ENGLISH.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Drug interactions with Ivermectin are rare – persons on immunosuppression, ie cyclosporin and similar should only use Ivermectin under a physician's supervision.

Risky venues include full-service restaurants, fitness centers, bars, and hotels. CDC estimates up to 50% of COVID-19 transmission occurs in homes.<sup>15</sup> CDC has also published guidelines for at-home holiday gatherings,<sup>16</sup> and, both the CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health have offered guidance to reduce COVID-19 risks for multi-generational families.<sup>17,18</sup>

6. *Get a flu shot* to protect against a combination infection<sup>19</sup>

A significant exposure typically occurs when a person is within 6 feet of a person who is showing symptoms, or a person without symptoms who tests positive for COVID-19, for at least 15 minutes. Thereafter, CDC recommends 10 days of post – exposure quarantine, which can be shortened to 7 days with a negative PCR test on day 5-6.

*If you get sick:*

Typical COVID-19 symptoms include:<sup>20</sup>

- Fever or chill
- Cough
- Shortness of breath / difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Body aches
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion
- Nausea
- Diarrhea

Contact your primary care provider within 24 hours of developing symptoms. PCR tests are the best choice for diagnosing COVID-19 but can miss detection early in the disease course. With persistent COVID-19 symptoms, testing/retesting at day 3-5 after symptom onset may correctly identify COVID-19.

***Important: Early therapy for COVID-19 is associated with better outcomes. Seek care early*** from an experienced COVID-19 provider, including use of the I-Mask protocol.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6944e1.htm>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/multifamily.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/living-in-close-quarters.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

<sup>21</sup> <https://covid19criticalcare.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/FLCCC-I-MASK-Protocol-v5-2020-11-28.pdf>

Seek *emergency* medical attention if you have:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent chest pain or pressure
- Confusion
- Inability to stay awake
- Blueish lips or face
- Pulse oximetry of less than 94%<sup>22</sup>

### Forecasts

The CDC is forecasting expansion of COVID-19 cases in Maryland.<sup>23</sup>

### Vaccine and Therapy Update

Both Pfizer and Moderna vaccines demonstrated over 90% protective immunity against COVID-19 after two immunizations. An AstraZeneca vaccine was slightly less effective. All were deemed safe and are under review at the US FDA. The first immunizations will likely be administered to healthcare providers, emergency responders, nursing homes, and other persons at risk. COVID-19 vaccines will likely be available to all mid-Spring. With increasing vaccinations, infections will subside and, there is potential for all members to safely meet, in-person, at DRCC in mid to late summer.<sup>24</sup>

Ivermectin is not yet recommended by the National Institutes of Health, for treatment of COVID-19 outside of clinical trials. However, 9 of 10 clinical studies, including several randomized prospective trials all demonstrate significant benefits and Ivermectin is now in use at several medical schools in the US.

Disciplined social distancing, hygiene, and personal protective equipment will continue to be crucial to reduce transmission. At-risk persons should take special care until infection rates subside or clinical practice improves. **Risk factors to consider include age over 50, chronic conditions, immune diseases, and cancer.**<sup>25</sup> Aerosols generated by singing, shouting, and to a lesser extent, normal speech add to infection risk.<sup>26</sup> Outdoor gatherings reduce the potential for COVID-19 transmission via aerosols and droplets for small and large groups by over 300x

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<sup>22</sup> Pulse oximeters are easy to use, inexpensive, and available at local pharmacies or online

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/files/Consolidated-Forecasts-Incident-Cumulative-Deaths-2020-11-23.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.cnet.com/how-to/two-vaccines-for-covid-19-may-be-ready-by-the-end-of-2020-heres-what-to-know/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/aerosol-generating-procedures-and-risk-of-covid-19-transmission.pdf>

when compared to indoor venues.<sup>27</sup> However, unprotected close proximity outdoors still poses risk.<sup>28</sup>

The good news is that progress towards effective therapies and vaccines are becoming available. Sometime in mid – late 2021, these developments will likely enable a more normal lifestyle including in person gatherings.

## **A WORD ABOUT RESILIENCE**

Long term high levels of stress can deplete our brain's reserves and ability to cope. How to recognize that you are stressed -- emotionally depleted -- "running on empty":

- Hyperirritability, anger (road rage), panic attacks, anxiety, confusion
- Brain fog, inability to concentrate, decreased ability to problem solve
- Inflexibility, difficulty "switching gears" from one task to another
- Tearfulness, crying easily
- Poor sleep, insomnia, or excessive fatigue

There is GOOD NEWS. We can intentionally build resilience. We can train our brains to regulate how we interpret events. A trained brain can ramp up performance when needed, and then down-regulate when the crisis abates. This training may be summarized in four components.

## **Four Core Components of Resilience**

These attributes are taken from APA<sup>29</sup> guidelines and George Everly's work. They can be learned and practiced.

### Connections

- Prioritize relationships: Isolation kills the spirit and shrinks our resilience Join a group, become part of something bigger than just you (Act 2:42)

### Foster Wellness

- Practice gratitude
- Healthy nutrition, sleep, hydration, regular exercise--all are important to staying strong and reducing the toll of emotional distress
- Practice journaling, Biblical meditation, prayer (1Th 5:16-18)
- Be intentional about "feeding your soul" with activities that you enjoy. You need to fight for this especially if you are in leadership during difficult times. The need to care for others can overwhelm your sense of responsibility. Be the best YOU, so you can serve effectively (Col 3).

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<sup>27</sup> Estimated from average air exchange/h standards for US HVAC installations compared to air exchanges derived from the average windspeed outdoors in the US and Maryland of 4 MPH.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.advisory.com/daily-briefing/2020/07/17/outdoor-gathering>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

- Avoid negative outlets for stress: alcohol, drugs, other substances (Eph 5:18)

#### Find Purpose

- Helping others, volunteering (Mat 25:40)
- Look for opportunities for self-discovery, new learnings, new interests (1Co 12:7)

#### Embrace Healthy Thinking

- Choose optimism, choose belief that you can make a difference in your circumstances and those of others, choose faith (Eph 2:10)
- Recognize irrational thinking, recognize that what has happened now or in the past is not an indicator of what the future will be (Mar 10:29; John 14:2-3)
- Know that God is near you and for you (Psa 43, Psa 56:8, Heb 13:5)