



Austin-Travis County Moves to Stage 3 of COVID-19 Risk-Based Guidelines

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COVID-19 Information



It remains imperative the residents limit their exposure to reduce positivity rate

Austin, Texas – Today, August 25, the City of Austin and Travis County announced they are moving to Stage 3 of the Austin Public Health (APH) [COVID-19 Risk-Based Guidelines](#). Nevertheless, it remains imperative that residents continue to practice all necessary precautions to continue to reduce the COVID-19 positivity rate.

“We are moving to Stage 3 because our key indicators are trending in the right direction,” said Austin-Travis County Interim Health Authority Dr. Mark Escott. “As much as possible, though, we would like individuals to continue to act as if we are still in Stage 4 so that we can be in a better place as school starts.”

COVID-19: Risk-Based Guidelines

	Practice Good Hygiene	Maintain Social Distancing	Wear Facial Coverings	Higher Risk Individuals Aged 65+, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart, lung and kidney disease, immunocompromised, obesity			Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/ Shopping	Workplaces Open	
	Avoid Sick People			Avoid Gatherings	Avoid Non-Essential Travel	Avoid Dining/ Shopping					
	Stay Home If Sick										
Stage 1	●				Greater than 25		Except with precautions	Gathering size TBD		All businesses	
Stage 2	●	●	●		Greater than 10		Except as essential	Greater than 25		Essential and reopened businesses	
Stage 3	●	●	●		Social and greater than 10	●	Except as essential	Social and greater than 10		Essential and reopened businesses	
Stage 4	●	●	●		Social and greater than 2	●	Except as essential	Social and Greater than 10	●	Except expanded essential businesses	Expanded essential businesses
Stage 5	●	●	●		Outside of household	●	Except as essential	Outside of household	●	Except as essential	Essential businesses only

Use this color-coded alert system to understand the stages of risk. This chart provides recommendations on what people should do to stay safe during the pandemic. Individual risk categories identified pertain to known risks of complication and death from COVID-19. This chart is subject to change as the situation evolves.

[AustinTexas.gov/COVID19](https://austintexas.gov/COVID19)

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In Stage 3, higher-risk individuals (those over the age of 65 and those who have chronic medical conditions) should avoid non-essential travel, dining and shopping. Everyone, regardless of risk, should avoid social gatherings and any gatherings greater than 10 people.

We also need the community to continue to be vigilant and practice good hygiene, social distancing, and wearing face coverings to prevent the disease from spreading and help keep each other safe.

“Our key indicators are all showing that we as a community are reducing our COVID-19 numbers, but we need to remain focused on improving the health outcomes for communities of color, who continue to be disproportionately impacted by the virus,” said Stephanie Hayden, APH Director.

While APH monitors the 7-day moving average of COVID-19 new hospital admissions as the primary key indicator for the Risk-Based Guidelines, additional key indicators, including the doubling time of new cases and current ICU and ventilator patients, are monitored to determine the current staging.

Positivity Rate

An additional key indicator that is being used to determine what risk stage Austin and Travis County will be in is the COVID-19 positivity rate, defined as the number of positive cases divided by the number of overall tests being performed.

This indicator includes data from APH testing sites as well as community partners. All positive COVID-19 results of Austin-Travis County residents are required to be reported to APH; most test providers in Austin also give data on the total number of tests performed. Altogether, the positivity rate is representative of nearly 90 percent of the tests conducted in Austin-Travis County.

“Our goal is to have a positivity rate below five percent by September 8, when most Austin-Travis County students start their school year,” said Dr. Escott. “In addition to an overall positivity rate below five percent, every individual race and ethnic group in Austin should have a positivity rate below five percent.”

The overall positivity rate and positivity rate by race/ethnicity can be found on the [COVID-19 Key Indicators Dashboard](#). About two weeks is currently needed to collect and process the positivity rate data from all of the testing partners in the area, so the data reported is currently from Week 32, the week ending August 8, 2020. The overall positivity rate in Austin-Travis County from Week 32 is 7.6 percent.

For the latest information and updates, visit [AustinTexas.gov/COVID19](https://austintexas.gov/COVID19).

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