

Cuomo Urges More New Yorkers to Get Tested for Coronavirus

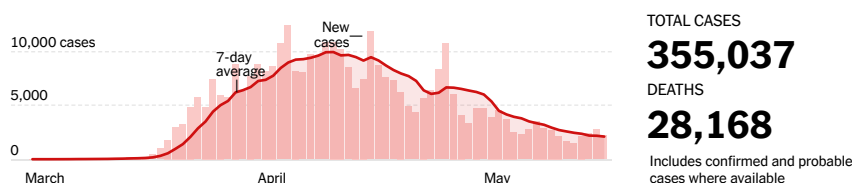
In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio warned residents to avoid crowding on city beaches, saying they could be shut down completely if necessary.

May 17, 2020 Updated 7:50 p.m. ET

Here's what you need to know:

- [Governor Cuomo urges New Yorkers to get tested to speed up reopening efforts.](#)
- [Don't crowd city beaches, de Blasio warns.](#)
- [Where did New Yorkers move to escape coronavirus? Follow their mail.](#)
- [The police will target crowding outside bars, de Blasio says.](#)
- [What's set to reopen \(and when\) in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.](#)
- [Tell us about the moments that have brought you hope, strength, humor and relief.](#)

Cases and deaths in New York State



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Governor Cuomo urges New Yorkers to get tested to speed up reopening efforts.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo wants thousands more New Yorkers to get tested for the coronavirus — so much so that he got tested during his live news briefing in Albany on Sunday.

He stood still and closed his eyes as a doctor fully swathed in personal protection equipment inserted a swab deep into his nose. Then the governor sat back down without so much as a sneeze.

“That is the whole test,” Mr. Cuomo said. “I’m not in pain, I’m not in discomfort. Closing my eyes was a moment of relaxation. There is no reason why you should not get the test.”

It was a shift in messaging from what doctors had been telling many New Yorkers with mild or no symptoms through much of this crisis — that they should stay home rather than risk getting sick or infecting others by seeking a test. But with the state increasing its testing capacity, health officials are pushing more residents to get tested to help them trace and contain the virus.

Mr. Cuomo announced on Sunday that more people now qualify for testing at one of the 700 drive-in and walk-in testing sites statewide.

Anyone who works in an industry set to restart in Phase 1 of New York’s reopening plan is now eligible to get tested, the governor said, in addition to anyone with Covid-19 symptoms or anyone who has been exposed to another person with the virus.

Phase 1 industries include construction, agriculture, retail, manufacturing and wholesale trade. Five New York regions, all of them upstate, are now entering Phase 1 of a gradual reopening process, and two more — the Capital Region and Western New York — only need more contact tracers before they can enter Phase 1, Mr. Cuomo said Sunday.

The state also launched a website to help people determine whether they are eligible for a test and where the nearest testing site is.

New York is now completing about 40,000 tests per day, Mr. Cuomo announced. Dr. Howard Zucker, the state health commissioner, said that the state's total capacity was 80,000 to 90,000 tests per day, when private labs are included.

Other updates from the governor's news conference:

- An additional 139 deaths were reported on Sunday. Of those, 106 were in hospitals and 33 were in nursing homes. The 139 deaths is the lowest one-day total reported since late March, according to state data.
- The total number of Covid-19 patients hospitalized in the state has slowly but steadily declined. As of Saturday, there were 5,897 patients hospitalized, down from 6,220 the day before.
- The average number of new virus patients who have been hospitalized over the last three days has also declined, to 374, down from 400 a day earlier.

Don't crowd city beaches, de Blasio warns.



A volleyball game at Coney Island on Saturday, when temperatures rose into the mid-70s. Kirsten Luce for The New York Times

Although New York City beaches will not open as usual by Memorial Day weekend, Mayor Bill de Blasio said the city would still be monitoring them in order to prevent crowding among people who do go there.

“No swimming. No parties. No sports. No gatherings,” Mr. de Blasio said at his daily news conference on Sunday. “We’re going to give people a chance to get it right.”

When city beaches are not officially open, lifeguards are not on duty and swimming is prohibited, but people are allowed onto the sand. With temperatures rising in the region, the mayor said the city would continue to treat the coming days as a typical off-season. “If someone from the local community wants to walk on the beach, that’s OK,” he said. “We’re going to let that happen for now.”

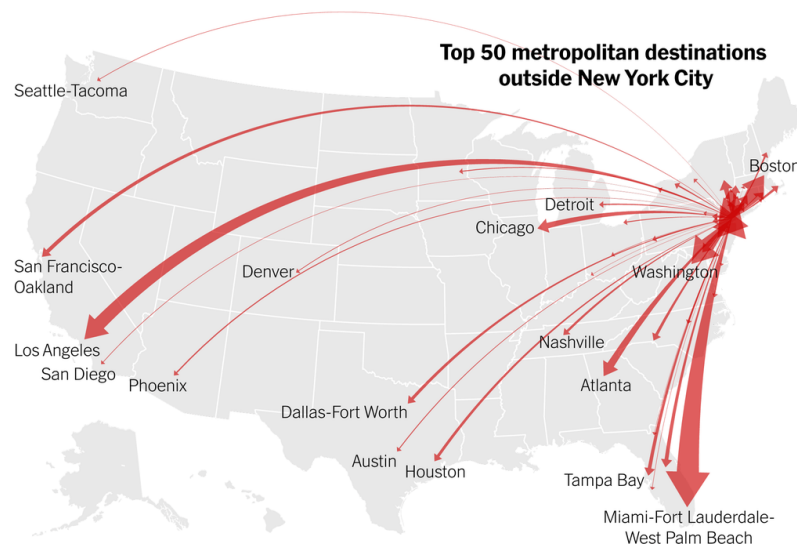
The city is preparing fencing, the mayor warned, to be used to “close off the beaches” in case there were widespread reports of people crowding and violating social distancing rules — though he praised residents’ behavior on and near the beaches so far. The mayor also said he did not want to see people traveling long distances to get to city beaches, especially to prevent crowding on public transportation.

The news came as beaches in four neighboring states — Connecticut, Delaware, New Jersey and New York — prepared to formally open later this week.

Other developments from the mayor's news conference:

- City officials are investigating 137 cases of pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome, a rare and mysterious illness in children that appears linked to the coronavirus, Mr. de Blasio said. Of those 137 cases, 66 had tested positive for the virus or antibodies, he said.
- One hundred newly trained contact tracers will begin working next week with people who tested positive at city hospitals, the mayor announced. Five hundred additional contract tracers have completed their training and will join the force soon, he said.
- The city had a “good day but not a perfect day” in slowing the spread of the virus, the mayor said, with 469 Covid-19 patients in intensive care, down from 506 on May 14. The percentage of people testing positive for the virus was at 11 percent, down from 13 percent.

Where did New Yorkers move to escape coronavirus? Follow their mail.



New York City has long been a cheek-to-jowl town with cramped apartments and determined strivers. But starting in March, as the coronavirus outbreak here began, parts of the city emptied out, with many leaving from New York’s wealthiest neighborhoods.

Mail-forwarding requests show where a number of them went. Some abandoned the Upper West Side for sunny Miami. Others left Gramercy Park for New Jersey. Some left Brooklyn apartments for California.

In March, the United States Post Office received 56,000 mail-forwarding requests from New York City, more than double the monthly average. In April, the number of requests went up to 81,000, twice the number from a year earlier. Sixty percent of those new requests were for destinations outside the city.

The data from neighborhoods that saw the most requests mirrors cellphone data showing that the city’s wealthiest areas saw the most movement.

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In April, a little more than half of those requests for destinations outside New York City originated in Manhattan, led by neighborhoods on the Upper West and Upper East Sides.

“Right after Covid hit, everyone just blasted out of here,” Councilwoman Helen Rosenthal said of the Upper West Side. “You could walk just in the middle of Columbus Avenue. And I often did.”

Many New Yorkers who fled their homes in the city moved to nearby areas in Long Island, New Jersey and upstate New York.

Black and Hispanic neighborhoods, including many areas where essential workers live, tended to have far fewer mail-forwarding requests.

Roman Suarez works for a union in New York City and travels on weekends doing stand-up comedy. He was in Texas when his boss in New York called to say things were shutting down. “I immediately rushed home,” said Mr. Suarez, 42, who lives in the Bronx. He picks up medication and groceries for about three dozen family members who live nearby.

“I just stayed and made myself available for my family,” he said. “Whenever New York goes through stuff, the best thing to do is just be there.”

The police will target crowding outside bars, de Blasio says.



A police officer speaks to a manager at Peter McManus Cafe, after receiving a call in regards to people congregating and drinking alcohol outside of the business in Chelsea, Manhattan on April 8th. Desiree Rios for The New York Times

New York City residents are not permitted to rub elbows inside their favorite bars and restaurants, so many have apparently turned to the next best thing: grabbing drinks to go and loitering on the sidewalks outside.

The result in some areas has been a public health problem, and law enforcement officials will patrol the city looking to break up those gatherings, Mayor Bill de Blasio said on Sunday.

The crackdown comes after reports of festive sidewalk gatherings in several areas of the city, including Manhattan and Brooklyn. A reporter for NY1, for example, pointed out that parts of the Upper East Side this weekend resembled the French Quarter section of New Orleans, which, unlike New York, permits public consumption of alcohol.

A gathering outside a bar “violates what we’re saying about social distancing and that puts lives in danger,” Mr. de Blasio said at his daily news conference on Sunday. “We’re not going to tolerate people starting to congregate. it’s as simple as that.”

What’s set to reopen (and when) in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.



A construction site in Rochester, N.Y., earlier this week. Stefani Reynolds for The New York Times

For almost two months, much of daily life has been halted in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut as officials sought to bring the coronavirus outbreak under control.

But with the virus showing signs of retreat, officials across the region have turned their attention to reviving the economies of their states.

This week and next will offer some of the first crucial tests of whether those plans will work and a window into what “normal” life may be like in the months ahead.

Here is a look at what types of businesses, services and public places are expected to reopen, and when, in each of the three states:

New York

On March 20, Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo issued an executive order putting New York “on pause.” Under the 10-point plan, all of nonessential businesses had to close by the evening of March 22. Mr. Cuomo extended the order once in April, and again on Thursday for a majority of New Yorkers.

On Friday, five of the state’s 10 regions became eligible to begin “phase one” of the state’s reopening plan. The five regions are:

- the Finger Lakes, including Rochester
- the Southern Tier, which borders Pennsylvania
- the Mohawk Valley, west of Albany
- the North Country, which includes the Adirondack Mountains.
- and Central New York, which includes Syracuse

The following types of businesses can resume in those regions, provided that certain public health measures are in place:

- Construction, manufacturing and wholesale trade.
- Some retail businesses — including those that sell clothing, electronics, furniture, books, sporting goods, shoes, flowers, jewelry and other types of goods — may open for curbside service only.
- Other activities that are allowed include drive-in movies, landscaping and gardening businesses and “low-risk recreational activities” like tennis, a sport with built-in social distancing.

As of Wednesday, elective surgeries were allowed in 47 New York counties; state court officials said this week that judges and staff members would begin returning to courthouses in 30 upstate counties on May 20. And on Friday, the governors of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Delaware jointly announced that beaches and lakeshores would be allowed to open in all four states next Friday for Memorial Day weekend, but at 50 percent capacity and with other limits in place.

New Jersey

State residents have been mostly required to stay at home under an executive order in effect since March 21. Gov. Phillip D. Murphy’s order makes exceptions for trips to visit businesses considered essential: getting takeout food at restaurants, procuring medical services or to meet other urgent demands.

Mr. Murphy said this week that under a new executive order, some nonessential businesses would be allowed to resume operations at various points this month. Among the changes:

- All retail stores in the state can begin offering curbside pickup of goods starting Monday; nonessential construction projects can also restart at 6 a.m. that day.
- Drive-in movies, religious services and other gatherings will be allowed as long as people stay in their cars.
- Officials allowed parks and golf courses to reopen on May 2.

Connecticut

Most Connecticut residents have been under orders to stay at home as much as possible since mid-March. But the state has not been hit quite as hard by the virus as New York and New Jersey, and officials envision what amounts to a broader, faster reopening.

Officials announced earlier this month that restaurants, offices, retail establishments and hair salons would be allowed to open on May 20 at 50 percent capacity with proper health precautions in place.

More specifically:

- **Restaurants** will be open for outdoor dining only; menus will need to be disposable or posted on boards; and silverware must be packaged or rolled.
- **Offices** can open but companies have been advised to encourage employees to continue working from home.
- **Retail** businesses are required to close fitting rooms, create physical barriers at checkout and install markers that indicate six feet of distance.
- **Hair salons** can open, but can see customers by appointment only and must close their waiting areas.

Connecticut officials have also said that colleges and universities in the state can reopen in stages over the summer and fall and that summer camps are on track to begin in late June.

Tell us about the moments that have brought you hope, strength, humor and relief.

The coronavirus outbreak has brought much of life in New York to a halt and there is no clear end in sight. But there are also moments that offer a sliver of strength, hope, humor or some other type of relief: a joke from a stranger on line at the supermarket; a favor from a friend down the block; a great meal ordered from a restaurant we want to survive; trivia night via Zoom with the bar down the street.

We'd like to hear about your moments, the ones that are helping you through these dark times. A reporter or editor may contact you. Your information will not be published without your consent.

Tell us a story about something that brought you hope, comfort, strength or a laugh during the past two months. *

300 words remaining

If you have one, send us a photo that represents this moment.

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