

## TOP LINE

### COVID-19 Fatigue

It wasn't long into the COVID-19 pandemic that public health officials began seeing another problem related to the health crisis – something akin to “battle fatigue.” It's a problem that grows the longer the crisis lasts and will be even more challenging this fall and winter than it is now.

Sometimes called “caution fatigue” or “crisis fatigue,” this can be brought on when a person feels they have no control over the situation they are in and can lead to a feeling that nothing they do really matters. It can affect a person's mental and emotional well-being. In the current situation, this fatigue can manifest itself simply as carelessness with following a health authority guidelines, but it may also show itself in the form of angry resistance.

According to Dr. Scott Gottlieb, former commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [people are exhausted from the months of battling the virus](#). He said the number of people following guidelines such as wearing masks and practicing social distancing could dwindle from that fatigue.

“People are exhausted. People have been social distancing and wearing masks and staying home for a long period of time right now. Small businesses are hurting,” Gottlieb said. “So I think that people's willingness to comply with the simple things that we know can reduce spread is going to start to fray as we head into fall and winter – and that's another challenge, trying to keep up our vigilance at a time when we know this can spread more aggressively”. (On a more positive note, studies are showing that personal prevention methods are lasting past lockdowns.)

As reported last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers [recommendations on how to deal with angry employees and customers](#) and limiting workplace violence associated with COVID-19. The CDC also has some advice on how to keep from getting to that stage of anger in the first place through its [guidance on coping with the stress of dealing with COVID-19 and its accompanying trials](#). These measures can be important not only for a person's well-being, but also for the health and safety of co-workers and family members.

Among the recommendations are:

- Talk with your co-workers, supervisors, and employees about job stress.
- Identify things that cause stress and work together to identify solutions.

- Identify those things that you do not have control over and do the best you can with the resources available to you.
- Increase your sense of control by developing a consistent daily routine when possible- ideally one that is similar to your schedule before the pandemic.
  - Keep a regular sleep schedule
  - Take breaks from work to stretch, exercise, or check in with family and friends.
  - Spend time outdoors, either being physically active or relaxing.
  - If you work from home, set a regular time to end your work for the day, if possible.
  - Do things you enjoy during non-work hours.
- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting and mentally exhausting.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns.
- Look for safe ways to offer social support to others, especially if they are showing signs of stress, such as [depression and anxiety](#).
- If you feel you may be misusing alcohol or other drugs (including prescription drugs) as a means of coping, reach out for help.
- Know where to go for help if you feel you or someone in your household may harm themselves or someone else.

*Questions to Consider:*

*Do we have the right systems and processes in place to identify and respond to threats of violence in the workplace? If not, where can we find best practices to mitigate this risk.*

## **COVID-19: THE HIGHLIGHTS**

Public health officials are expecting a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases following the Labor Day weekend, based on statistics from previous holidays. Officials said that [Memorial Day weekend in late May](#) was a likely catalyst for increased outbreaks of the virus and that the country's worst spike came a few weeks after the Fourth of July holiday, with more than 60,000 new cases a day, although it's difficult to separate those holiday gatherings from other potential sources of infection.

U.S. intelligence agents say that China, Russia and Iran have been trying to [steal information from this country's companies and universities that are trying to develop a vaccine for COVID-19](#). Officials say foreign spy agencies have focused on research at universities because their data protection is not as strong as those of pharmaceutical companies, but that, so far, there haven't been any reported data breaches related to the vaccine research.

Experts on food contamination said Monday [it is highly unlikely that COVID-19 is transmitted through food or its packaging](#). They didn't completely rule out the possibility that a person could be infected by eating something contaminated with the virus, but said there is no evidence that this has ever happened.

India has passed Brazil as the country with [the second most confirmed COVID-19 cases](#), after recording a daily record high of 90,802 cases Monday.

Four countries in Africa—South Sudan, northeast Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Yemen—are [the first countries to be designated as facing intensified famine conditions because of the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

[Almost half of U.S. states saw a rise in COVID-19 cases last week](#), whereas cases were increasing in only three states in mid-August. Most of the 22 states with rising numbers are in the South and Midwest, although the three states with the largest populations—California, Texas and Florida—are seeing decreasing numbers of confirmed cases.

## **BEYOND THE NOISE: THE ‘NEW NORMAL’**

The latest study looking ahead at the effects of the coronavirus pandemic through the end of the year offers some sobering predictions.

[A report by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington \(IHME\)](#), which the government has relied on for coronavirus forecasts, says that the number of deaths from the virus in the United States will more than double by January 1.

More than 186,000 have died in this country already. In its “most likely scenario,” the study projects 410,450 deaths in the United States by January 1, which would mean another 224,000 would die in the next four months. The “best-case scenario,” which assumes there will be universal masking, predicts 288,380 deaths in this country by January 1. The “worst-case scenario,” which assumes that restrictions and mask directives will ease and that people will disregard recommendations, predicts as many as 620,028 people in the United States will die by the beginning of the new year.

The daily death rate could be as high as 3,000 a day by December, a huge increase from the 800 a day now, if the public disregards public health guidance.

Officials said that it will be government policies and public compliance that “will largely determine how many people die of COVID-19” in the fall and winter.

They said that the facts are irrefutable that wearing masks, practicing social distancing and limiting gatherings are the most important factors in stopping the spread of the virus. However, they also said that using masks probably won’t be enough to keep down the spread of the virus in the fall and winter, and that there is not enough data now to determine what social distancing restrictions will be most effective then.

## **TRUSTED RESOURCES: for numbers & guidance**

[Johns Hopkins University](#) – Coronavirus Resource Center  
[World Health Organization](#) – COVID-19 Pandemic  
[Center for Disease Control](#) – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

*Please contact Secure Source International at [info@securesource.com](mailto:info@securesource.com) to schedule a leadership roundtable with our intelligence and security experts to dive into these topics and discuss security and safety related best-practices.*