



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**City of St. Joseph**  
Health Department

## **P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

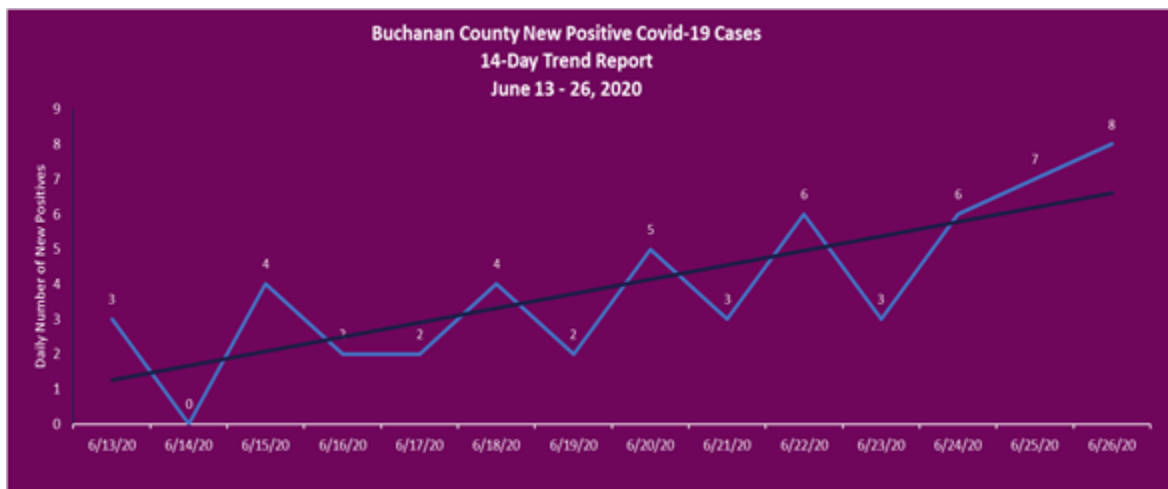
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### HEALTH DEPARTMENT REMINDER TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS

In June, the City of St. Joseph Health Department began publishing a chart which uses data from the most recent two weeks of new daily COVID-19 positive cases to calculate a trend line of new cases in our community. Throughout the month and until June 23rd, the trend line was consistently moving downward. The recent increase in new cases has officials concerned and serves as a reminder to the public to make personal decisions to maintain safe distancing and wear face coverings in public, and to continue increased hand washing/sanitizing.



*Two-week trend reflecting data for Buchanan County, MO*

As our community opens doors to commerce and social gatherings, taking precautions when in public becomes critically important for the health and safety of residents. The mandates have changed, but the guidelines have not. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is thought to spread mostly by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. The virus may also spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth or eyes, causing infection. Personal prevention and environmental prevention practices are important ways to prevent the virus's spread.

Personal prevention practices include handwashing, staying home when sick, maintaining six feet of distance between yourself and others, and wearing a cloth face covering. Environmental prevention practices consist of cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces at least daily or between uses as much as possible – for example, all types of handles and railings and knobs, towels, remote controls, items in kitchens and bathrooms, computer keyboards and phones, etc. Employers are encouraged to implement additional safety and hygiene practices and to develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. Employers may also ask staff to wear a face mask when in common areas or hallways and consider limiting access to common areas such as breakrooms and harder to clean surfaces like drinking fountains.

The guidance on face masks has changed since the pandemic started. This novel coronavirus is still just months old, and scientists are constantly learning more about it – including more reasons why wearing masks is so important. The virus spreads easily, just by talking or breathing. This coronavirus is highly contagious. Without mitigation efforts like stay-at-home orders, each person with the coronavirus infects an average of two to three other people, making its reproductive number twice that of the flu. The reproductive number of a virus, or  $R_0$  ("R-naught"), is the average number of people one infected person will subsequently infect, and that number is fluid based on many factors including human behavior and mitigation efforts. COVID-19 also spreads easily without any symptoms, either from asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carriers. The virus

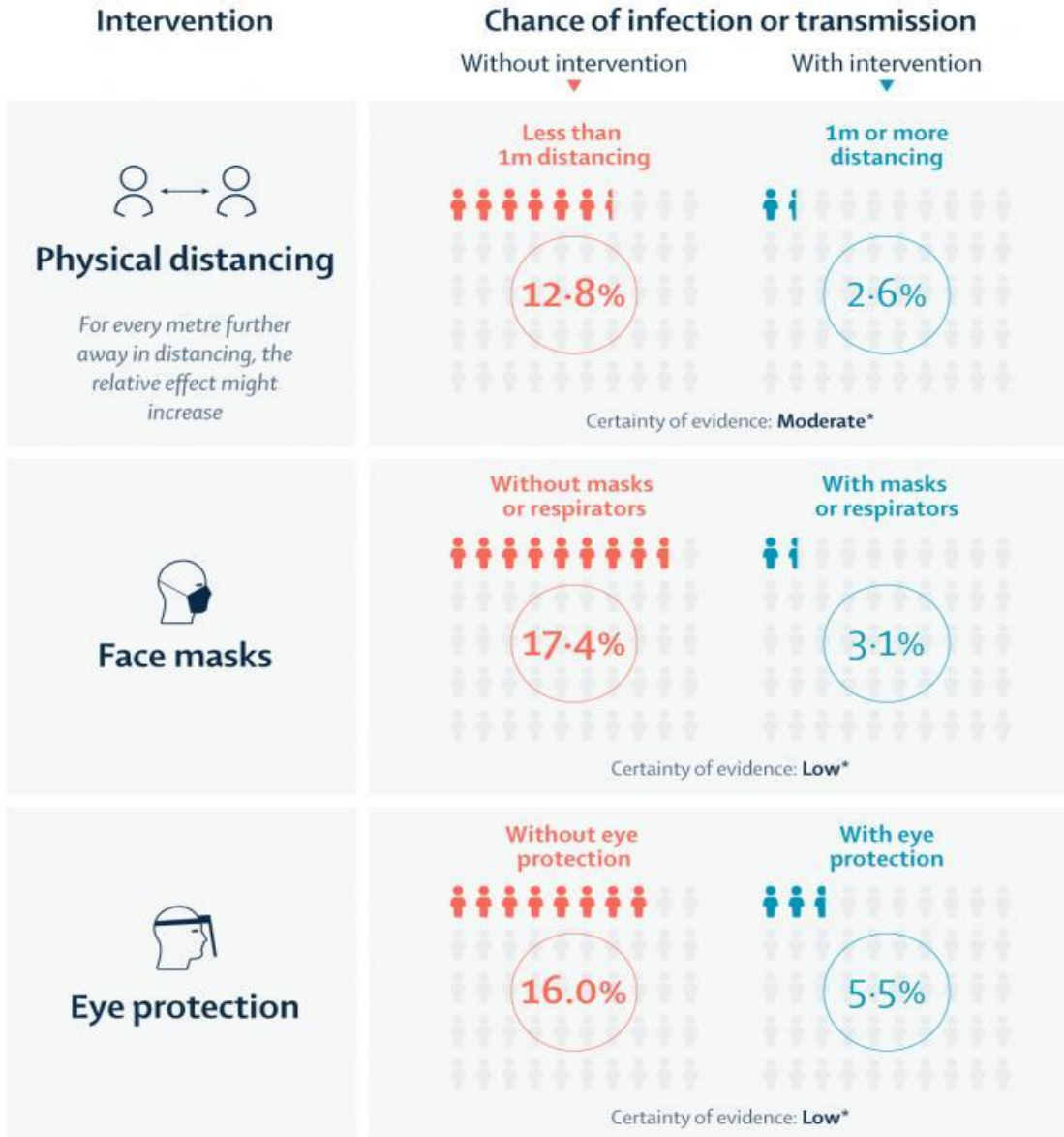
has a long incubation period (up to 14 days) and carriers may be most contagious in the 48 hours before they get symptoms. COVID-19 is not just spread by people who are sneezing and coughing. It is often people who seem well and do not have a fever but are spreading the virus as they go about their normal routine.

Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when out in public (see attached graphic from the Lancet on impact), the mouth and nose should be entirely covered with a cloth face cover when around others. Do not use face coverings on children under age 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing or cannot remove the mask without assistance. The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker. Continue to keep six feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for physical distancing.

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# What protects against COVID-19 infection or transmission?



\* See the paper below for full explanations of certainty and why these categories are used. Moderate certainty: we are moderately confident in the effect estimate; the true effect is probably close to the estimate, but it is possibly substantially different. Low certainty: our confidence in the effect estimate is limited; the true effect could be substantially different from the estimate of the effect.

**Even when properly used and combined, none of these interventions offers complete protection and other basic protective measures (such as hand hygiene) are essential to reduce transmission**

Chu DK, Akl EA, Duda S, et al.  
Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet* 2020. Published online June 1.

**THE LANCET**