

OPINION

7 effective measures to prevent a second coronavirus outbreak | Opinion

Ming Wang, Guest Columnist Published 7:18 p.m. CT April 22, 2020 | Updated 4:35 p.m. CT May 15, 2020

Most of us have stayed home during the shutdown. The floodgates have opened and silent carriers are coming out of their homes potentially infecting tens of millions in an even more deadly second wave.

When the COVID-19 outbreak reached America in early March, we as a nation found that, unfortunately, we were not sufficiently prepared.

The lack of availability of test kits resulted in a delay in identifying and treating the earliest groups of patients in the first few crucial weeks of the outbreak. America has now become the most infected nation in the world, with the highest number of deaths.

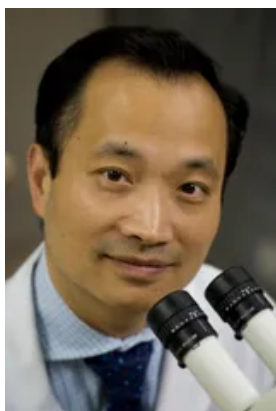
Now another critical period has come. As our nation reopens, we face the potentially serious risk of an even more deadly “second wave!”

50 million people died in the [1918 Spanish flu pandemic](https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2020/04/18/tennessean-archives-how-spanish-flu-came-nashville-comparison-coronavirus-covid-19-battle/2987038001/) which infected one in every three people in the world, and the majority of the deaths actually occurred not in the first wave, but in the *second and third* waves of the deadly outbreak.

More: [Don't go back to business as usual when Tennessee's economy reopens | Plazas](https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/columnists/david-plazas/2020/04/21/coronavirus-tennessee-dont-go-back-business-usual-economy-reopens/2996312001/)

More: [Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee should re-open economy as we flatten coronavirus curve | Featured letter](https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2020/04/07/coronavirus-tennessee-governor-bill-lee-open-up-economy/2962306001/)

Over a million Americans have now tested positive with COVID-19, but the actual number of those who are infected could be 10 times higher. In other words, 10 million Americans could now be infected but are asymptomatic.



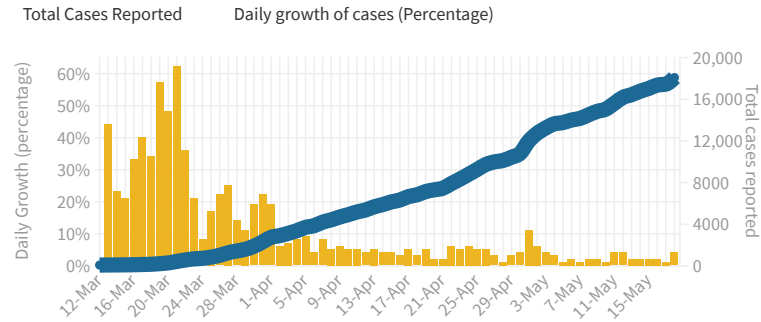
Most of us have stayed home during the shutdown. However, now the floodgates have opened and the silent carriers are coming out of their homes, merging into society, and potentially infecting tens of millions in an even more deadly second wave.

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The situation is very serious, since we are reopening our country at a time when only a small percent of Americans have even been tested. We do need to reopen since our economy would otherwise collapse, but ideally we should only do so when the majority of our population has been tested. That way, those who test positive would not be coming out of their homes!

Coronavirus in Tennessee: Total cases and daily spread

Coronavirus is spreading in Tennessee, but as of early April, that spread is slowing. The daily growth of new cases has reached its lowest levels since the outbreak began.



Source: [Tennessee Department of Health](#) • To prevent growth statistics from being skewed, this graphic begins tracking the coronavirus after the state confirmed 10+ cases on March 12.

✿ A Flourish chart (https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/1948708/?utm_source=showcase&utm_campaign=visualisation/1948708)

If a few dozen infected could lead to over a million infected in 2 short months, what could 10 million infected now do?

A resurgence is indeed seen in many other countries. Since many of them are 2 months ahead of us, we now do have a valuable opportunity to learn what works in mitigating a second wave.

I believe we need to implement the following 7 key measures:

1. The reopening should be gradual and state-dependent.
2. Test all employees in these early-to-open businesses.
3. Allow those who have healed from COVID-19 (and have also been shown that they are indeed no longer shedding the virus) to return to work first.
4. Perform large-scale, voluntary testing! We should dramatically increase our speed of testing by at least tenfold, with the goal of completing testing on the majority of Americans ASAP!
5. Require testing in high-risk facilities such as hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, prisons, and for high-risk professionals such as police, paramedics, supermarket staff, pastors, and restaurant employees.
6. Continue social distancing, mask wearing and avoiding crowded activities.
7. Implement contact-tracing technology. It was encouraging that archrivals Google and Apple have been able to find common ground to work together in this effort. However, in a democratic society such as ours, we must also protect the privacy and individual rights of our citizens.

As a nation, we are now at the second critical time in this pandemic, and this time we truly need to do the right thing.

It is nearly certain that a second outbreak will come within a few months, so our goal right now should be to keep the height of that peak as low as possible to save lives and our economy!

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