

## Potential Coronavirus Timelines & 10 Potential Outcomes

I broke down the article into 10 possible outcomes we may be facing in 2020-2021.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2020/03/coronavirus-social-distancing-over-back-to-normal/608752>

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### TIMELINE ONE: ONE TO TWO MONTHS April - May 2020

#### **Outcome #1**

- America is through with most of its social distancing because the coronavirus turns out “to not be a serious pathogen.
- All of the people who are now infected have very mild disease and immunity is being generated.
- This would be fantastic and produce “a lot of head-scratching” among the experts.

#### **Outcome #2**

- Failure to do social distancing produces a “big, short, sharp shock” of infections.
- Health-care system is overwhelmed and an enormous number of people die.
- Lots of people are infected, but recover, the broader population is, if not all the way, closer to immunity.

#### **Summary**

- Both outcomes make it okay to go out again in a couple of months.
  - In late spring, experts will have learned more about the first wave of infections, strain on hospitals, containment efforts, and have a better sense of whether those who recover from an infection are immune to future infections and for how long.
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### TIMELINE TWO: THREE TO FOUR MONTHS June - July 2020

#### **Outcome #3**

- Isolate contagious or more vulnerable people while a large portion of the population returns to something resembling normal life.

- Fewer tables in restaurants, smaller numbers of people at a bar in places with higher incidences of the disease.
- In other places people might leave home sooner or during different periods.

#### **Outcome #4**

- Public-health authorities choose to focus on one variable more than another.
- Restaurants and small businesses reopen.
- Large crowd events canceled or remain postponed.

#### **Outcome #5**

- Researchers identify a treatment for COVID-19 that quickly and reliably ease symptoms and prevent deaths.
- Eliminates the need for social distancing.
- Large-scale outbreaks are still be possible.
- Risk of overburdening hospitals if an outbreak arises reduced.

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#### TIMELINE THREE: FOUR TO 12 MONTHS August 2020 - July 2021

We will know if the spread of COVID-19 substantially decrease during the summer like the flu and if it is seasonal.

#### **Outcome #6**

- The virus recedes in the summer.
- Some social distancing measures remain in place.
- Outdoor activities in small groups would probably be fine.
- Bars and restaurants reopen.
- Large gatherings will likely still be out -- no Lollapalooza, no Major League Baseball, no crowded beaches, etc.
- Sports leagues might resume in the summer but without crowds.
- TV shows might forgo studio audiences.

- Stores might cap the number of shoppers allowed in at once.
- Large crowds are going to be out for quite some time, but the smaller-scale units of American life might be phased back in.
- There would need to be some responsible measures to help people not get too crowded in the airports.
- The downside of this closer-to-normal summer is that a resurgence of the disease in six months or so is a strong possibility (though not guaranteed).
- A “fall wave” of infections might arrive in September or October, reintroducing the need for social distancing.
- But many people could have developed immunity and go out without risking infection.
- Schools might even reopen.
- America is in a better position to absorb another wave of infections.

### **Outcome #7**

- The virus does not recede in the summer.
- Another onslaught of infections could appear.
- But hospitals shouldn’t be overwhelmed.
- Social distancing could be scaled back.
- This would still be a world with rigorous hand-washing, well-smothered sneezing, and generous amounts of hand sanitizer (and suspicion of anyone who disregards these public-health norms).
- People who can work remotely or order food via delivery would still do so instead of leaving the house.

### **Outcome #8**

- The fall could introduce some chaos, regardless of the virus’s seasonality.
- The election is a potentially huge super-spreading event.
- Rumors could be spread by social-media about people coughing near a certain polling place could cause turnout there to plummet.

- The flu will return around the time of the election too.
- All of the things that happen under normal circumstances — including natural disasters (summer and fall are hurricane and wildfire season too, don't forget) — won't necessarily be put on hold during this highly abnormal time.

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TIMELINE FOUR: 12 TO 18 MONTHS (OR LONGER)  
July – February 2021

**Outcome #9**

- Spring 2021 vaccine becomes available.
- If the vaccine is just right, normal life will resume, but not immediately. 350 million people will need to be vaccinated.

**Outcome #10**

- No one is able to develop a safe, effective vaccine.
- America could be well on its way to population-level immunity, perhaps reaching a Teflon critical mass by the fall of 2021.
- Even in a vaccine-less world, reaching population-level immunity means that future outbreaks of COVID-19 should be far less damaging than the one the U.S. is currently confronting.
- The virus might remain threatening and continue to circulate, infecting people like the cold or flu does -- but by then, life would be back to normal — though at the same time, completely changed.