

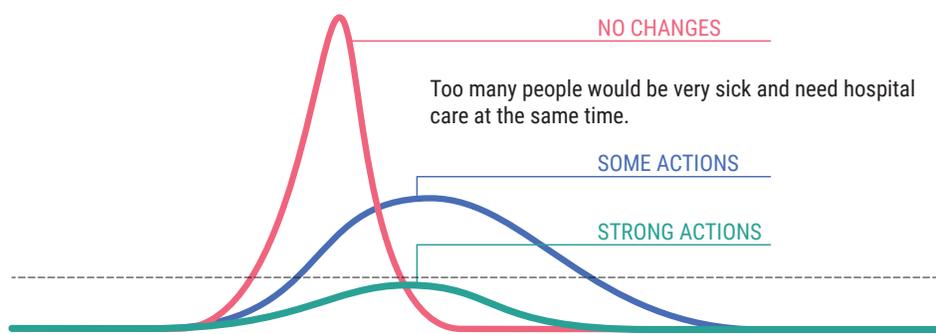
## Slowing the spread of COVID-19

# Flattening the curve

On January 22 of this year, there were no confirmed cases of COVID-19 infection in the United States. By March 17, there were over 5,000 confirmed cases, with more every day. Over time, millions of us could be affected.

When experts make a graph of the spread of the disease, it shows a flat line that curves sharply upward, like a ramp at a skateboard park. A steep curve means the virus is spreading fast. That's because each infected person spreads the disease to more than just one other person. They can pass it to the whole network of people they come into contact with. Then those people spread it to their network. And the curve keeps going up.

“Flattening the curve” means taking steps to prevent the spread of the virus so that the curve becomes less steep and less high. A flatter curve means fewer people infected at the same time and a decreased impact on our hospitals, our communities, and our lives.



## Steps you can take to flatten the curve

By taking action now, we can slow the virus and flatten the curve. Here are some things you can do:

- ✔ **Practice social distancing.** If possible, stay home from work, and keep kids at home. When in public, keep a space of 6 feet between yourself and others. Stay away from crowds. Follow the directions of your state and local authorities.
- ✔ **Practice good hygiene.** Wash your hands often. Scrub with soap and water for 20 seconds. It's especially important after you have been in a public place and after you cough, sneeze, or blow your nose. If you can't wash your hands, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- ✔ **If you're sick, stay away from others.** Sleep in a separate room, and don't share household items such as towels, dishes, and glasses. Wear a face mask, if you have one, when you're around others. If you need care, call your doctor. Don't go to the doctor's office or the hospital unless you're told to go.

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