

# Coronavirus Precautions More Important Now than Ever



As the government encourages business openings, we must not end the preventative measures we each take to limit the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, behavior in communities since May 1 suggests that many think we are past the threat – fewer people are wearing masks, people are going out in groups, children are playing in parks, sharing toys, etc.

In my professional opinion as a health and wellness professor, the reason COVID-19 has not spread in Utah the way it has in places such as New York or Europe is because we have sheltered in our homes. We were able to intervene and close down early before the virus spread like it did in other places. Our distance from urban centers has simply delayed the hit to our community, not made us immune from its spread. Despite extreme measures of staying home across Utah, we have continued to average just below 200 new cases per day across the state. Had we not closed most places down, it likely would have been significantly worse, and it is far from over.

The fact that we are opening businesses, parks and other locations does not mean we have suddenly reached a point where the virus is no longer a risk or is no longer contagious. Based on scientific data, simply opening everything back up and returning to normal life will likely result in the spread of the virus like we have yet to see in Utah. We cannot assume everything is normal until we have a vaccine and/or guaranteed treatment for the masses, and estimates are 2021. Until that time, the virus will likely continue to spread.

To make a slow opening across the state feasible, we must be diligent in our efforts when we are out. We should wear masks, which prevents unintended particulates from your mouth and nose from landing on surfaces others will touch, thus spreading the virus if you are a carrier. We should not shake hands, hug or physically touch others (except those you live with). We should maintain 6 feet of distance from everyone around us, which prevents airborne spread. We should frequently wash our hands or sanitize when touching things others may have touched, such as doorknobs, shopping carts and credit card machines, and if we touch our own faces, as we might be a carrier of the virus and not know it.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever, chills, shaking, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell), stay home. If you are in a high-risk group or around someone who has asthma, lung disease, diabetes, heart conditions, kidney disease, obesity, high blood pressure, liver disease, are immunocompromised, living in a care facility or 65+ in age, be extremely cautious.

If we are reckless now, we may be forced into another shutdown. We cannot maintain a permanent shutdown and survive

economically, nor can we return to business as usual without causing significant increases in COVID-19 cases and deaths.

So, let's all be diligent to prevent the spread as we go out so we can avoid a COVID-19 surge and another government-required shutdown. The lives and economic needs of our community depend upon each of us practicing responsible preventative measures.

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## **How to Juggle Parenting and Working from Home – Seven Tips**



As we continue to find ourselves in new territory with COVID-19, we face major changes to our routines – including parents having children at home while they work. While many parents have worked from home when their child was sick or out of school, the current situation may require us to accept this arrangement for weeks (or months) to come. If you are still trying to figure out how to make this work in your home, consider the following tips to help you get your work done and also meet your children's needs.

1. It can be difficult for younger children to see you as anything but their parent. They may not understand that even though you are at home, you aren't going to be available to them all the time. Talk to them about your job and explain why it is important.

2. Create a home office or designated workspace so children understand that when they see you there, it means you are working.

3. Give children some uninterrupted time at various points

throughout the day. Set up a daily schedule that includes breaks for snacks, brief physical activity and lunch. Go over the schedule for the day during breakfast and make sure children who can read can see the schedule. For younger children, set a timer so they know exactly when their next break and time with you will be.

4. Give younger children a “job.” Give them tasks to complete while you work and tell them that you are both “going to work.” Set up a desk for them and give them work supplies such as markers or crayons, paper and a glue stick. Try giving them assignments, such as drawing pictures or writing stories for you and make sure to have activity books and reading books available. Take time during breaks to let them share what they have created or read.

5. Allow older children to have designated time for screen-based activities, but make sure their schedule also includes activities such as playing outside, doing chores or tasks around the house, reading a book or spending time on hobbies. If they don’t have hobbies, this is a great time to help them explore some. Hobby and activity ideas can be found through Discover 4-H at <https://utah4h.org/discover/>. Take time during your scheduled breaks to ask about what they have been doing. This shows you are interested and ensures they are following the set schedule.

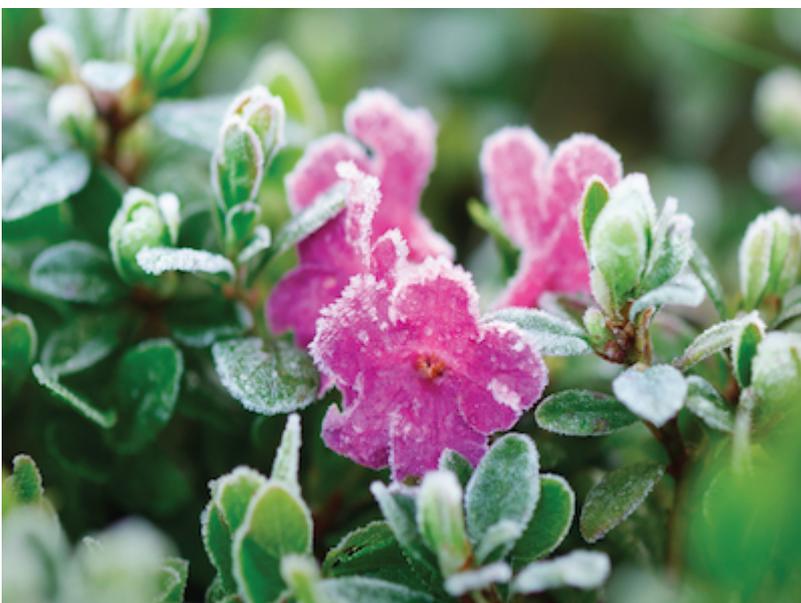
6. When you need to have a meeting without interruptions, put a sign on your office door or desk that says, “In a meeting.” Explain that the sign means not to disturb you unless there is an emergency. The visual cue will help remind them that you are at work.

7. Finally, if your work allows it and your productivity won't be negatively affected, shift your work hours to earlier in the morning or later in the evening when kids are in bed or when another adult can help with childcare. If this isn't possible, consider scheduling work tasks that require quiet and focused concentration when you know your kids will be involved in an engaging activity, like during screen time.

Remember that being an engaged parent and a productive employee while working at home is not an easy feat. Try not to get frustrated or discouraged if it takes a while to figure out what works best for your family. Once everyone gets used to the new normal, it should make the juggling act a little easier for all of you.

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## **Timing Can Be Tricky for Spring Planting**



Determining when to plant a garden can be especially confusing in Utah's unpredictable, varied climate where last-frost dates can vary by many days within just a few miles. Many experienced gardeners have planted and later lost their plants to frost.

An example of how fickle Utah's climate can be is in Cache Valley. Frost-free days vary from an average of 113 days in Lewiston and Trenton to 158 days on the USU campus. Similar examples are common around the state.

Geographic characteristics of where you live can help in determining when to plant. When a yard is located in a populated area or on a mountain bench, it usually has a longer growing season. Other areas located at slightly lower elevations where cold air drains and cannot escape have a shorter season. This is why local commercial orchards are generally located on benches. Additionally, urban and suburban areas are slightly warmer than surrounding areas due to the urban heat effect. Heat from buildings and warmth generated by sunlight reflected from roads and other surfaces increases temperatures and delays frost. It can be helpful to chat with a local farmer or experienced gardener in your area to determine what works for him or her regarding when to plant.

In addition to frost information, it is important to take into account the needs of the plants. Vegetables planted locally fall into four basic categories: hardy, semi-hardy, tender and very tender. Depending on which category a plant belongs to, planting dates vary from early spring until early summer. Consider the following:

- Hardy vegetables, including asparagus, broccoli,

cabbage, onions, peas and spinach, can be planted as soon as the soil is workable in early spring. This usually ranges between 45 and 60 days before the average last frost. These same vegetables can be safely planted until the average last frost date.

- Semi-hardy plants, such as beets, carrots, lettuce and potatoes, can be planted one to two weeks after the hardy group. These can be planted until the average last-frost date.
- Tender vegetables, such as celery, cucumbers, corn and most beans, should be planted on the average last-frost date.
- Very tender plants, such as squash, beans, melons, tomatoes, eggplants and peppers, should not be planted until at least a week after the average last frost. Even if frost does not occur before this time, these plants will not grow well and are more susceptible to disease until warmer weather.

If you have lost plants to frost, you are not alone, and all you can do is try again.

<p><b>Average Frost Dates for Various Utah Locations. Note that these dates are averages and can vary from year to year.</b></p>	
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	<b>Frost</b>		
	<b>Dates</b>		
<b>City</b>	<b>Last</b>	<b>First</b>	<b>Frost-Free Days</b>
Alpine	May 20	September 30	136
Blanding	May 13	October 12	153
Cedar City	May 10	October 5	148
Delta	May 17	September 28	134
Farmington	May 5	October 10	158
Fillmore	May 16	October 4	140
Huntsville	June 11	September 9	89
Kanab	May 7	October 20	166
Lake Town	June 15	September 10	87
Logan	May 14	September 25	135
Morgan	June 6	September 11	98
Moroni	June 1	September 18	109
Ogden	May 1	October 24	176
Park City	June 9	September 1	92
Price	May 12	October 7	148
Roosevelt	May 18	September 25	130
Spanish Fork	May 1	October 13	165

St. George	April 6	October 28	205
Tooele	May 7	October 14	159
Tremonton	May 3	October 10	160

**For information on areas not listed, contact your local county Extension office.**

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# Five Tips to Promote Mental Wellness at Work



Young businesswoman stretching hands in office

Mental wellness at work is an essential part of overall well-being that is often overlooked. Any job can be stressful, even

if you love what you do. Some stress can be healthy, such as motivation to perform well, but long-term and unmanaged stress can be harmful to both physical and mental health. While everyone's approach may be different, finding strategies to help with your mental wellness can help you meet both personal and professional goals. Consider these tips to start prioritizing your mental wellness at work.

1. Track your stressors – Identify situations that cause stress and record how you respond to them. This can help you find patterns between your stressors and your reactions. Experts recommend keeping a journal for 1-2 weeks to track your thoughts, feelings, information about the environment, people and physical settings as well as how you reacted.
2. Choose healthy reactions – Rather than raising your voice or heading to the vending machine, opt for a healthy way to nurture your mental wellness when you feel stress or tension at work. Some examples include any form of physical activity, mental strategies like meditation, or taking time to socialize. [CLICK HERE](#) to learn about healthy stress management strategies and why they work.
3. Take time to recharge – Protect your mental wellness at work and take time to disconnect and replenish. Whether you schedule short breaks throughout the day, take time off to unwind, or “switch off” when you're not engaged in work-related activities, find a way to recharge that you enjoy and that fits your needs.
4. Create a positive work environment – Regardless of the

setting, we all experience and contribute to our work environment. There are many things that affect it, such as the physical set up or stressors, that also affect our overall wellbeing. Fortunately, there are ways we can set ourselves up for success, like staying connected to colleagues or setting up a comfortable work space. [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about contributing to a positive work environment.

5. Seek help – We all need help from time to time, and there are many community or workplace resources we can take advantage of when workplace stressors become too much. Examples include employee assistance programs, mental health professionals or reaching out to friends and family.

Source: Coping With Stress at Work <https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/work-stress>

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# May Monthly Checklist from USU Extension Gardener's Almanac



Man in galoshes standing on brown soil, low section

April showers bring May flowers – as well as a wide array of gardening tasks. Utah State University Extension's Gardener's Almanac provides a checklist for each month as well as links for tips and further information. The May checklist follows.

- Plant warm-season vegetables and annual flowers once the threat of the last frost has passed. [Click here](#) for a listing of the average last and first frost dates.
- By [planting tomatoes](#) deeper, they are able to form more roots along the stem, creating a more vigorous plant.
- Consider planting [sweet corn in the garden](#) every other week (until early July) to extend the harvest.
- Consider the various types of fertilizers. [Click here](#) for information on traditional fertilizer options. [Click here](#) for information on organic fertilizers.

- Thin out overcrowded seedlings using a pair of scissors. Try to avoid disturbing the young roots.
- Protect fruit blossoms and tender garden plants from late freezing temperatures. [Click here](#) for information on critical temperatures and fruit.
- Plant summer-blooming bulbs including gladiola, begonia, dahlia and canna.
- Divide warm-season ornamental grasses when new growth begins to emerge.
- It's already time to take notice of weeds. [Click here](#) for information.
- Allow the foliage of spring blooming bulbs (tulips, daffodils and crocus) to die down before cutting the leaves off.
- [Click here](#) for information on planting a lawn.
- Turfgrass needs minimal irrigation each week. [Click here](#) to learn about irrigation needs in your area.
- In compacted sites, aerate with hollow core aerator when turfgrass is actively growing (April to June).

- Control broadleaf [weeds in the lawn](#) when temperatures are between 60 and 80 F. Follow the label and stop use of broadleaf herbicides once the temperature is above 85 F.
- Apply a slow-release [lawn fertilizer](#) to provide a long-lasting effect throughout the summer months.

### **Pests and Problems:**

- Monitor newly planted vegetables for [cutworm](#) and [flea beetle](#) damage.
- Monitor for [cankerworm](#) damage on scrub oak and Box Elder trees along the foothills.
- Monitor for aphids on lush new spring growth on a variety of plants. Treat for aphids by using “softer” solutions such as spraying them with a hard stream of water or by using an insecticidal soap.
- Monitor for [slugs and snails](#). These pests thrive in moist, cool areas of the garden and landscape, feeding on a variety of plant hosts.
- Protect Ash trees from the [lilac-ash borer](#) around the first of May
- Control [codling moth](#) in apples and pears to reduce wormy fruit. For specific timing, see the [Utah Pests Advisories](#).

- Treat for powdery mildew on [apples](#) beginning when leaves are emerging (at  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch green) until June.
- Watch for [insect pests in raspberries](#) from mid-May thru early June.
- Watch for [cutworm](#) damage in turfgrass and new vegetable starts.
- Monitor for damaging [turfgrass insects](#). In areas previously damaged, consider a preventative (systemic) insecticide.

For all things gardening, visit [garden.usu.edu](http://garden.usu.edu). Here you will find videos, checklists, downloadable information, information on our demonstration gardens, and sign-up links for our online gardening courses.