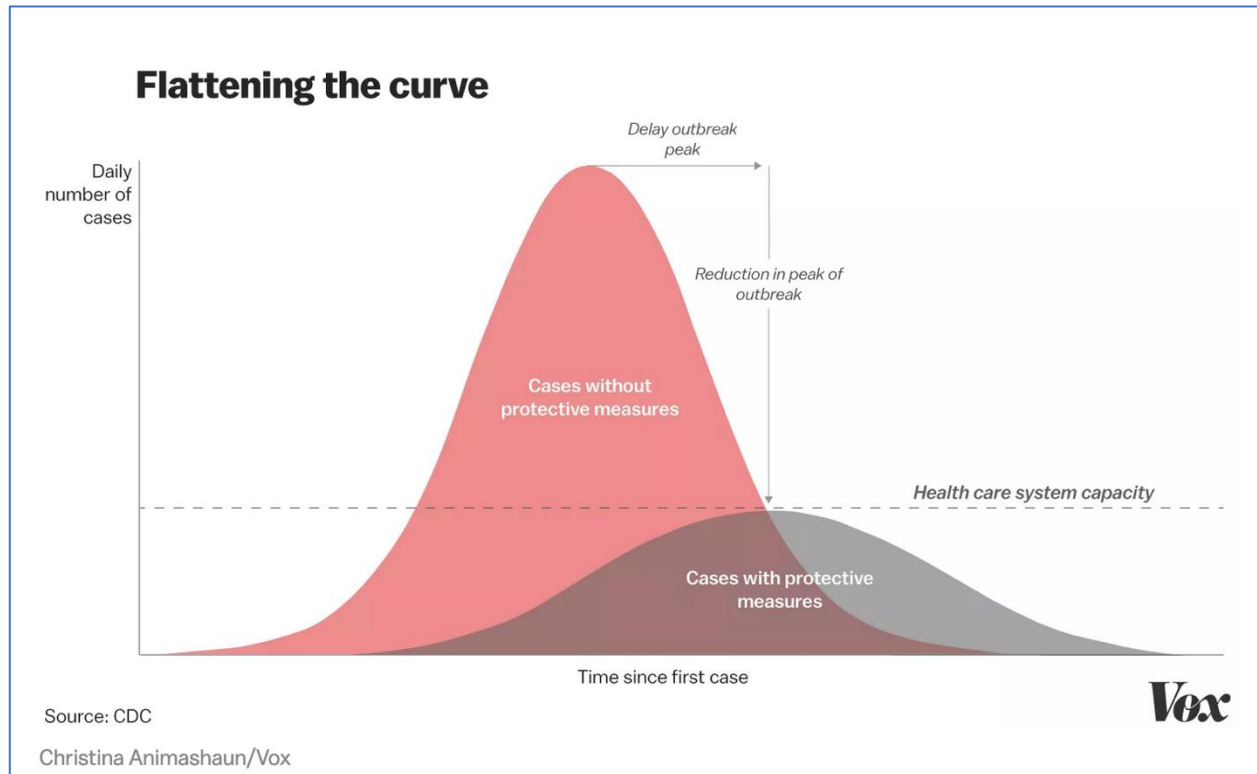


## Why social distancing, event cancellations and self-quarantines are necessary

The speed at which the COVID-19 outbreak plays-out matters hugely for its consequences. What epidemiologists fear most is the health care system becoming overwhelmed by a sudden explosion of illness that requires more people to be hospitalized than it can handle. In that scenario, more people will die because there won't be enough hospital beds or ventilators to keep them alive.

A disastrous inundation of hospitals can likely be averted with protective measures — closing schools, canceling mass gatherings, working from home, [self-quarantine](#), [self-isolation](#), avoiding crowds — to keep the virus from spreading fast.

Epidemiologists call this strategy of preventing a huge spike in cases “flattening the curve”:



Flattening the curve means that all the social distancing measures now being deployed aren't so much about preventing illness but rather slowing down the rate at which people get sick.

So even if you're young and healthy, it's your job to follow social distancing measures to avoid spreading it to others, and keep the epidemic in slow motion. The more young and healthy people are sick at the same time, the more old people will be sick, and the more pressure there will be on the health care system. Along with social distancing measures, people must stay home if they are feeling unwell and especially if they received a formal COVID-19 diagnosis and [advice to self-isolate](#). That way, the US health care system can focus on the patients who really need it during this outbreak.

Learn more at <https://www.vox.com/2020/3/10/21171481/coronavirus-us-cases-quarantine-cancellation>.