

COVID-19 infection undercount: CDC says actual victims likely closer to 20 million Americans and many more deaths

[A new] estimate [suggests that 20 million Americans have been infected with COVID-19,] roughly 10 times as many infections as the 2.3 million cases that have been confirmed. Officials have long known that millions of people were infected without knowing it and that many cases are being missed because of gaps in testing.

The news comes as the Trump administration works to tamp down nationwide concern about the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) as about a dozen [states are seeing worrisome increases](#) in cases.

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"It's clear that many individuals in this nation are still susceptible," Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said on a call with reporters [June 25].

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The new estimate is based on CDC studies of blood samples collected nationwide — some by the CDC and others from blood donations and other sources. Many infections were not caught in early testing, when supplies were limited and federal officials prioritized testing for those with symptoms.

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The officials say the nature of the outbreak now is different than months ago, when deaths topped more than 1,000 per day for weeks and hospitals were stretched beyond capacity across the country. The new increase in positive cases, they said, is capturing what has long been there. They say it is only now showing up in data because the U.S. has increased testing and surveillance.

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