

# Expert puts grim COVID-19 projections into perspective

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This week, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading infectious diseases expert, shared sobering estimates that COVID-19 could kill 100,000 to 240,000 Americans. Top government scientists warn that the death toll

could be even higher if Americans don't follow the strict guidelines put in place to slow the spread of the virus.

Dr. Gregory Poland, a Mayo Clinic infectious diseases expert, helps put this grim prediction into perspective.

"I think, appropriately so, what they're trying to do is frame what they think is likely to happen so that people can be better prepared emotionally, physically, etc. by knowing what the worst-case modeling shows," says Dr. Poland.

"I don't see us getting into that 200,000 range. I may be surprised, but looking at the transmission dynamics, what the rates of serious illness and [death](#) have been, I would not predict that from where we are this many weeks into it. I think it could get up toward the 100,000 range, but I'm not thinking that it's going to get that much higher."

Dr. Poland echoed public health official's message that the only way to minimize deaths is to continue the difficult restrictions on American life.

"That's really what's going to drive that number onto the low side rather than the high side of that projection," Dr. Poland adds.

President Donald Trump has extended federal social distancing guidelines through the end of April.

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