

Head of Oxford University Vaccine Team Says Face Masks, Social Distancing Will Continue Until Next Summer

“We’re going to be in a position where mask-wearing and social distancing don’t change”

By [Steve Watson](#)

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The leader of the coronavirus vaccine team at Oxford University [declared Tuesday](#) that nothing is going to approach returning to normal until at least next Summer.

Professor Andrew Pollard said that face masks and social distancing rules are not going away any time soon, declaring that a vaccine is still months away and would only become available for key workers during the first phase of its rollout anyway.

“Life won’t be back to normal until summer at the earliest. We may need masks until July,” Pollard said during an online seminar with Oxford alumni.

“If we end up with a vaccine that’s effective in preventing the disease, that is by far the best way to control the virus. But in the medium term, we’ll still need better treatments,” the professor added.

“When does life get back to normal? Even if we had enough vaccine for everyone, in my view it’s unlikely that we’re going to very rapidly be in a position where the physical distancing rules can be just dropped,” he added.

Politicians and health advisors to governments have repeatedly said that strict measures will have to remain in place until a vaccine is available.

“Until we’ve got a high level of immunity in the population so that we can stop the virus so most vulnerable people are immune, there is going to be a risk. Initially, we’re going to be in a position where mask-wearing and social distancing don’t change,” Pollard reiterated.

“Only when there is a big drop in serious cases will governments feel able to relax these measures. This is a very easily transmissible virus,” he further commented.

Back in May, scientists [expressed doubts](#) over the effectiveness of Oxford’s coronavirus vaccine, after all of the monkeys used in initial testing later contracted coronavirus.

While funding is pouring into vaccine trials, other research on coronavirus treatments has all but been ignored, despite some scientists claiming to have discovered anti-bodies that can

[completely block COVID-19](#) or [effectively neutralise](#) the virus.

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