



Messages and talking points

Week of March 6, 2023

With the end of California’s COVID-19 State of Emergency, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [revises their masking framework](#) effective April 3.

- The updated guidance will move CDPH COVID-19 mask guidance for high-risk settings from strict *requirements* to *recommendations*, as population immunity and clinical outcomes have improved.
- The guidance will remove masking requirements in health care settings, long-term care facilities, correctional facilities and homeless, emergency and warming/cooling centers.
- Individual facilities may set their own requirements.
- The updated guidance is unchanged for general community settings and continues to use a framework based on the [CDC COVID-19 Community Levels](#).
- Current CalOSHA rules, including mask rules for workplaces are not changing. Employers subject to the CalOSHA non-emergency COVID-19 standards must follow requirements for employees to mask for 10 days if exposed or exiting isolation.
- Regardless of the COVID-19 community levels, CDPH recommends:
 - Wearing a mask around others if you have respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, runny nose, and/or sore throat),
 - Wearing a mask in indoor areas of public transportation (such as in airplanes, trains, buses, ferries) and transportation hubs (such as airports, stations, and seaports).
 - When choosing to wear a mask, ensure your mask provides the best fit and filtration (respirators like N95, KN95 and KN94 are best).
 - If you’ve had a significant exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, wear a mask for 10 days.

[Effective March 13](#) by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), a COVID-19 positive person may end isolation after five days if they feel well, have improving symptoms, and are fever-free for 24 hours, with less emphasis on testing negative.

- This change aligns with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations and takes effect on Monday, March 13.
- This change removes the guidance to test negative in order to leave isolation before Day 10.
- If an individual is well with no symptoms, or symptoms are mild or improving, and is fever free for 24 hours, isolation may end after 5 days.
- After ending isolation, persons should mask around others until 10 days have passed since illness onset but may remove their mask sooner than Day 10 with two sequential negative tests one day apart.





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The COVID-19 local health emergency was lifted February 28, aligning with the end of the California emergency declaration.

- The remaining local COVID-19 health orders were also rescinded:
 - Isolation, quarantine in corrections, long term care testing, lab reporting.
 - Seasonal flu vaccine or mask requirement for healthcare workers remains in place.
- [California Emergency Declaration](#) ended Feb 28:
 - Remaining State emergency regulatory waivers ended.
 - State health orders (e.g., [masking in health care](#)) remain in effect as of today.
 - The reduction of state resources and staffing will continue through end of the state's fiscal year.
- Federal Disaster Declaration and Public Health Emergency to end [May 11](#):
 - Medi-Cal re-enrollment procedures to resume April 1.
 - Medi-Cal COVID uninsured program to end May 31.
 - FDA Emergency Use Authorizations end date TBD (not May 11).
 - Free vaccine and medications will continue until federal supply runs out.
- Alameda County anticipates ongoing safety net access to vaccines and tests for uninsured.

Emergencies are ending but COVID-19 will remain in our lives.

- The greatest risk of disease is for older adults and people with serious health conditions.
- As new variants emerge, the Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) will continue monitoring and reporting virus trends.
- Medical knowledge of short and long-term impacts of COVID-19 will expand, while treatments and vaccination strategies will continue to evolve.

Disaster Recovery Center in Oakland remains open through March 16 for Alameda County residents who experienced damage or losses due to winter rainstorms.

- Come in person to 7001 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA to sign up:
 - Open until Thursday, March 16, 2023,
 - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Closed Sundays
- Bring the following information with you: Social Security or Tax ID Number, address of damaged home, current phone number, address where you can get mail or email notifications, insurance information, if available, and bank account and routing numbers to receive direct deposit of funds.

March is National Nutrition Month, an the opportunity to promote healthy eating and proper nutrition with the community.

- We reaffirm our efforts to promote the health and wellbeing of all Alameda County residents and continue efforts to close equity gaps and barriers to access healthy, medically supportive, affordable food.





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- Food is medicine and [Recipe4Health](#) provides a sustainable means to put fresh produce on the tables of residents who need it most while teaching the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
- For inquiries specifically about Recipe4Health, please email Recipe4health@acgov.org.
- The Public Health Department's [Nutrition Services](#) program promotes healthy living for residents too. The team supports healthy eating and physical activity to reduce chronic disease and improve long-term health.
- Nutrition Services' program includes the Cooking for Health Academy, Healthy Retail, Safe Routes to School, and Early Childhood Nutrition and Policy Program.

Don't miss important information about Medi-Cal health coverage. Make sure Alameda County has current contact information.

- Contact [Alameda County Social Services Agency](#), (888) 999-4772, to report any changes to name, address, phone number, or e-mail address.
- Report changes to Medi-Cal or complete the annual renewal online.
 - Create an online account by going to benefitscal.com and selecting the "Create An Account" link in the upper right corner, underneath the "Log In" button.

Wellness Messages

Take steps to lower the risk of becoming infected or spreading viruses.

- Protect yourself and loved ones against flu, COVID-19, and other respiratory viruses which continue circulating across Alameda County. Consider the following:
 - There's still time to [get vaccinated and boosted](#).
 - Stay home if you're sick.
 - Wear a high-quality, [well-fitted mask](#) indoors.
 - [Test for COVID-19](#) and seek treatment right away if you are positive and have symptoms.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes and [wash your hands frequently](#).

COVID-19 boosters are available for Alameda County residents at the Weekes Community Center Point of Distribution (POD).

- COVID-19 boosters for ages 5 and older are available.
- Novavax boosters are also available for adults in some situations. Novavax is made like traditional vaccines and is different from mRNA vaccines.
- Walk-ins are available on a first come first serve basis, and appointments are encouraged.
- Make appointments [online](#) or call the Community Support Line at 510-268-2101.
- COVID-19 home vaccination registration is available [online](#) or by calling the Community Support Line at 510-268-2101.





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- Priority is given to residents from high need zip codes: 94601, 94603, 94605, 94606, 94607, 94621, 94541, 94544, 94545, 94577, 94578, 94580, 94560

COVID-19 Testing & Treatment

There are a few ways to access COVID-19 testing.

- If you have insurance, seek testing through your health care provider.
- If you are uninsured or underinsured, please schedule an appointment at [Community Testing Sites](#) or [find a Testing Event](#) near you.
- Avoid using unauthorized COVID-19 testing sites that may put you at risk. [Here are helpful tips for choosing a safe testing site.](#)
- Free COVID-19 test kits and masks are still distributed to residents through community partners and testing and vaccination sites.

Whether or not you have symptoms, if you test positive you are positive for COVID-19.

- Follow [isolation instructions](#) and learn if treatment is right for you (treatment in pill form must be started within 5 days of symptoms starting).
 - Contact your health care provider right away.
 - If you can't reach them or if you do not have a health care provider, a free telehealth service is available for all Californians through Sesame Care: Call (833) 686-5051 (6:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., 7 days a week) or make an appointment at sesamecare.com/covidca.
 - If you have questions or need help, call the Community Support Team at 510-268-2101.

