



ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

Office of Emergency Services
4985 Broder Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Alameda County to Require Masking in Most Indoor Public Settings

Hospitalizations of people with COVID-19 have more than doubled in the last month.

ALAMEDA COUNTY, CA – To limit the impact of increasing COVID-19 cases on hospitalizations, today Alameda County health officials announced that masks will be required in most indoor public settings beginning 12:01 a.m. on Friday, June 3, 2022. This Order does not apply to the City of Berkeley, which is an independent Local Health Jurisdiction. The Alameda County Health Officer continues to monitor COVID cases and hospitalizations to determine when this Order can be lifted safely.

Alameda County will not require masking in K-12 school settings through the end of the 2021-22 school year, but masking is still strongly recommended. Masks will be required in all other children and youth settings, including childcare, summer school, and youth programs, as practicable.

Daily reported COVID-19 cases have exceeded the peak of last summer’s Delta wave and are now approaching levels seen during the winter 2020-21 wave, at comparable lab-reported testing levels. Reported cases are an underestimate of the total due to home testing and unidentified infections.

Hospitalizations are also rising after remaining stable during the early weeks of this wave. Daily new admissions of patients with COVID-19 rapidly increased in recent days and now exceed last summer’s peak. We expect to reach CDC’s “High” COVID-19 Community Level soon, given current trends.

In addition, when COVID-19 cases started to rise again in April, we did not observe in our data the disproportionate impacts on communities of color. That is no longer true and Hispanic/Latino residents now have the highest case rate in Alameda County among the largest race/ethnicity groups.

“Rising COVID cases in Alameda County are now leading to more people being hospitalized and today’s action reflects the seriousness of the moment,” said Alameda County Health Officer Dr. Nicholas Moss. “We cannot ignore the data, and we can’t predict when this wave may end. Putting our masks back on gives us the best opportunity to limit the impact of a prolonged wave on our communities.”

While COVID-19 vaccination, boosters, prior infection and available medications provide protection against severe illness, the virus that causes COVID is circulating at very high levels in Alameda County. Even with strong protections, such high numbers of infections put more people at risk and in the hospital.

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Masking provides an added layer of protection against infection from a virus that spreads through the air. Wearing a [high-quality mask](#) protects both the wearer and those around them, and having more people masked will help slow the spread of COVID-19. Children under age 2 should not mask.

“We thank Alameda County residents, employers, and businesses for continuing to rise to the challenge in response to this pandemic,” said Colleen Chawla, Director of the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (AC HCSA). “Unfortunately, COVID has not gone away and once again, we must take measures to protect ourselves, friends and community members, and employees and patrons from this very infectious virus.”

Throughout the pandemic, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino/a/x, and Pacific Islander residents have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. These same communities have historically experienced health disparities and the pandemic revealed and exacerbated those issues. Alameda County is committed to mitigating COVID-19 disparities where possible.

“We are seeing the same pattern of disproportionate impact on hard hit communities play out again with rising cases,” said Kimi Watkins-Tartt, Director of AC HCSA’s Public Health Department. “Many Black and Brown residents are frontline workers who can’t work from home and are in workplaces where they frequently interact with the public. A masking order will limit the spread of COVID in these vulnerable communities.”

In addition to masking, residents are reminded to continue taking other steps to limit spreading COVID-19: stay home if sick or positive; test if symptomatic or exposed; and keep gatherings small and outdoors or increase [ventilation](#) if gathering indoors.

If you are not [vaccinated or boosted](#), we strongly urge you to drop into a clinic if you are eligible and talk to your health care provider about [treatment](#) if you test positive for COVID and have mild or moderate symptoms. Visit the [COVID-19 website](#) for informational resources.

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Alameda County health officials will be available for interviews today, Thursday, from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. Please email eoc-pio@acgov.org or call 510-267-8001 to schedule.

Alameda County, located in the eastern San Francisco Bay Area, is the seventh (7th) most populous county in the State of California. With a total area of more than 800 square miles and a population of more than 1.6 million residents, Alameda County encompasses urban, suburban, and rural geographic areas as well as a large unincorporated area. Alameda County is characterized by its rich ethnic diversity and is ranked as one of the most diverse counties in the country. Based on the 2018 American Community Survey, 32.1 percent of the County’s population is foreign-born and there is no majority racial or ethnic group. In addition, according to the California Department of Education, 60 languages were spoken by English language learners in the K-12 public school systems in Alameda County in 2019-2020.

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