



Alameda County Public Health Department: COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Prepared for the California Medical Association

1. Are patients in this jurisdiction allowed to see the doctor for routine physicals, well child visits, and other preventative care?

Yes. As Alameda County continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare providers and facilities are encouraged to gradually resume full scope of services when possible and safe to do so, based on California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) guidance. For a list of Alameda County recommendations and resources, please see the most recent [Alameda County Health Advisory for the Resumption of Non-Urgent Health Care Services](#).

A few considerations for the provision of preventative and non-urgent medical services include:

- Using telehealth as the default mechanism to provide patient care, whenever medically appropriate;
- Minimizing the number of caregivers, friends or family members that accompany patients to their in-person appointments;
- Having patients and families wait outside, when possible, until the provider is ready to see them;
- Maintaining social distancing whenever possible, even in the healthcare setting;
- Conducting rounds, staff meetings, and consults via conference calls or video conferencing as much as possible;
- Reconfiguring work spaces so that employees can sit or stand at least 6 feet apart at all times;
- Enforcing a requirement for universal masking in clinics and other healthcare facilities;
- Considering the temporary reassignment of high-risk healthcare workers to tasks and work settings that minimize their exposure to others (including working remotely)

Note: Evidence is mounting for the role of transmission from people who are asymptomatic, presymptomatic or minimally symptomatic. For this reason, screening visitors to a health clinic for fever or other COVID-19 symptoms will not be sufficient to exclude potentially contagious individuals from the environment. Keeping people masked, practicing good hand hygiene, maintaining physical distance (though this can be difficult in an exam room), frequently cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces, and reducing time of in-person interaction are all means to reduce the risk of transmission, for example, in a well-child clinic.



2. Is there a local public health order in this jurisdiction that limits the ability of physicians to perform elective surgical procedures?

Alameda County does not have a Health Order in place to limit elective surgical procedures, though a [Health Advisory for the Resumption of Non-Urgent Health Care Services](#) does exist. Surgeons and surgical facilities are encouraged to establish protocols to prioritize the scheduling of patient procedures, considering the clinical impacts of any treatment delays. Plastic surgeons are encouraged to schedule necessary reconstructive procedures, but to defer aesthetic and cosmetic procedures at this time.

For additional considerations and resources, please visit the California Department of Public Health webpage for [Resuming California's Deferred and Preventive Health Care](#), which includes the [Joint Statement Roadmap for Resuming Elective Surgery after COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

3. When public health orders in this jurisdiction change, where can physicians find updates? Is there an email list that practices can join?

Updates to the Health Officer Orders can be found at the [Alameda County Health Officer Orders Webpage](#).

Additionally, the Alameda County Public Health Department sends out Health Alerts, Advisories, and Updates, which are posted on the [Alameda County Health Alert Webpage](#). Healthcare providers who are interested in receiving notifications about these communications are encouraged to [register for Health Alerts](#).

4. How can physicians in this jurisdiction find out more information about COVID-19 infection rates, hospitalizations, ventilators and ICU beds, and other factors affecting the capacity of the health care system?

Alameda County COVID-19 Dashboards are available for people to learn more about COVID-19 infection rates, hospitalizations, death rates and more. Please be advised that [COVID-19 Dashboard 1](#) includes cases and case rates over time, by gender, age group, and city; [COVID-19 Dashboard 2](#) includes deaths by race ethnicity, hospitalizations, ICU admissions, testing data, and cases and case rates by zip code.

Data for these dashboards are available for daily download at the [Alameda County Open Data Hub](#), which also includes a [user guide](#) for the site.



5. Is there a central resource for information about available COVID-19 testing sites in this jurisdiction?

Yes. The Alameda County Public Health Department has formed a COVID-19 Testing Task Force to develop and implement a coordinated testing program to address disparities, ensure countywide access, and support the County's COVID response. Please click [here](#) to see a list of known COVID-19 testing sites in Alameda County, as of June 2, 2020; click [here](#) to see a map of testing sites and other services being offered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The list of COVID-19 testing sites can also be accessed by clicking "COVID-19 Testing in Alameda County" from our [Testing Guidance Webpage](#). For questions about the list or to initiate a testing partnership with Alameda County, please contact: covid19testing@acgov.org.

6. How are you tracking PPE needs within your jurisdiction? Where can a small practice get information on applying to receive PPE from the local distribution process?

In Alameda County, we are tracking PPE needs in our jurisdiction through various means to include resource requests and surveying of high-exposure entities such as acute care hospitals, long term care facilities and first responder agencies.

We are encouraging medical and health facilities of all types and sizes to engage with their normal vendors as well as seek out new vendors in order to meet their PPE needs. If a small practice is unable to procure PPE through other means, a reasonable and rational emergency supply of PPE can be requested utilizing the *Resource Request Form for PPE and Medical Supplies Specific for COVID-19* located on the [Alameda County EMS Agency's COVID-19 webpage](#).