



ALAMEDA COUNTY COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA ★ CALIFORNIA

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

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

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Alameda County Statement in Response to State’s February 28 Masking Announcements

At this time, masking requirements in Alameda County are set by the State’s [Guidance for the Use of Face Masks](#) and therefore, the County is aligned with the State’s update today permitting unvaccinated individuals from going without masks in indoor public settings. Given continued improvements in local and statewide measures, this is a reasonable change.

Also announced today, the state will move from *requiring* to *strongly recommending* masks for all in K-12 school and childcare settings at 11:59pm on Friday March 11th. We will provide an update to residents regarding our alignment with this change in state policy before the end of this week. We are evaluating changes to mask policy in local schools and childcare settings amid decreasing community transmission in Alameda County and in light of recently announced changes to the CDC’s recommendations for implementing prevention strategies.

The Alameda County Public Health Department always reviews state guidance when it is shared with local health jurisdictions. In general, we align with state K-12 schools and childcare guidance because it has prioritized in-person learning and relied on evidence to balance prevention and risk. In addition, we seek to limit confusion and minimize the patchwork of restrictions that can undermine overall efforts without always contributing to significant differences in health outcomes. However, we make decisions to align local guidance with the state only after an assessment of how changes may impact residents. It is crucial that our local COVID-19 response continues to protect the public's health in Alameda County broadly and in the communities most impacted by the pandemic.

Alameda County case rates and hospitalizations continue to decline from their peak in January. Risk of exposure to COVID is down, but masking indoors is still strongly recommended for everyone. The Alameda County Public Health Department encourages all institutions and businesses to consider how best to support the wellbeing of their employees and patrons with masking and other policies. Families and individuals should make decisions about when to mask (if not required) based on their risk and comfort levels.

If you are considering not wearing a mask, understand the risk of exposure to COVID for you and those around you. Talk to your medical provider if you have health conditions or are immunocompromised. If you’re feeling sick, stay at home. If you must leave your home, wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask.

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