

CORONAVIRUS UPDATES

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Week of March 7

Alameda County Health Care Services Agency Update

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As of March 10, more than 98% of the U.S. population is in a location with Low or Medium COVID-19 community levels, and Alameda County is at the **low** level, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). COVID-19 Community Levels are a new tool to help residents decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Community Levels in the Low category are advised to:

- Stay [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines, and
- [Get tested](#) if symptoms are present.

Later this month, school spring breaks will begin across Alameda County, and we encourage residents who are planning travel to use this map to check community levels by destinations. Please also review [travel guidance](#) to make informed decisions that reduce the risk of COVID-19. Consider ordering [free at-home COVID-19 tests](#) to have on hand if needed - at home or while traveling. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is distributing tests to schools. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to ask their child's school about testing before returning to school after spring break.

The Alameda County Responsibility to Community Health (ARCH) program is available for residents unable to self-isolate after testing positive for COVID-19. The program resumed on January 1 of this year, aimed at curbing the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Alameda County. For more information, visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) available in multiple languages on the Alameda County Social Services COVID-19 Information and Resources [webpage](#) under the ARCH Program.

As we near the 2-year anniversary of the first Shelter-in-Place order next week, we are mindful of the toll that COVID-19 has taken on our community. Health disparities that existed prior to COVID-19 in communities of color and historically disadvantaged areas of the county were amplified by the pandemic. Next week, we'll publish a special edition to reflect on lessons learned, recognize significant achievements, and take a look forward at the future of disease control and prevention. The accomplishments made over the last two years would not have been possible without many partnerships and the community. We are grateful for your support and appreciate your readership.

County is Aligned With California K-12 and Childcare Guidance on Masking

Effective 11:59 p.m. on March 11, masking requirements become strong recommendations in K-12 schools and childcare settings in Alameda County. This decision was made in alignment with the State's K-12 and childcare guidance and after considering the reduced number of positive cases since its peak in January. This is the right time to move face masking guidance from *requirement* to *recommendation* in most settings as cases are declining to and Alameda County is in the [CDC's](#) Low community level.



Though the mask requirement has been lifted at this time, high-quality, well-fitting masks remain recommended to limit the spread of COVID-19 for individuals at high risk. Mask policy changes do not signal an end to the COVID-19 pandemic as mask requirements may be needed again for future surges. The healthiest choices to avoid getting COVID-19 include these tips:

- Get vaccinated and boosted.
- Keep gatherings small and outdoors.
- If gathering indoors, wear a high-quality mask and improve ventilation.
- Get tested if exposed, sick, and before and after gatherings or travel.
- Stay home if ill, whether you can get tested or not, and even if it feels like allergies.

In-Home COVID-19 Vaccinations for Priority Zip Codes



In-home vaccinations are available to residents who live in these zip codes: 94601, 94603, 94605, 94607, 94621, 94641, 94544, 94577, 94578, 94580. There is no cost and anyone can call the vaccine call center at **510-208-4VAX (510-208-4829)** to register, or make an online [in-home vaccination appointment](#). The in-home vax team can provide first and second doses, boosters, and additional doses for people who are immunocompromised. Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are available. You can request your vaccine type when registering for your

appointment.

COVID Safety and Ventilation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a layered approach to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and this includes [strong](#)

ventilation indoors.

- Open outdoor air dampers beyond minimum settings to reduce or eliminate HVAC air recirculation.
- Open windows and doors, when weather conditions allow, to increase outdoor airflow. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to occupants in the building.
- Use fans to increase the effectiveness of the open windows.



For more information, please visit CDC to [improve ventilation in your home](#).

Epidemic Data Points (7-day lag)

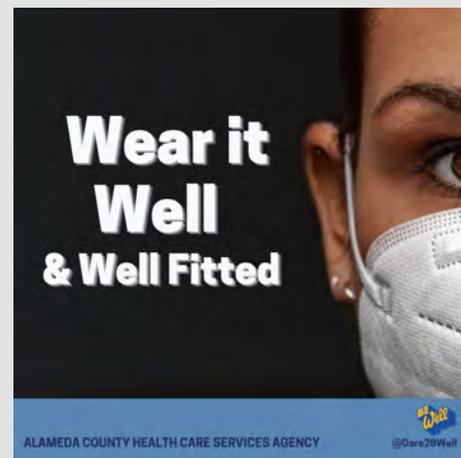
- 11 cases per 100,000
- <3% test positivity
- 102 hospitalized
- 19 in ICU
- 210 deaths since January 1st
- Now "Low" on [CDC Community Levels](#)

Please visit our [dashboard](#) for more data on COVID-19.

Vaccine Locations and Resources for COVID Safety

Vaccines are available throughout the week and some locations offer weekend hours for people unable to get away during the week:

- [Allen Temple Baptist Church](#), East Oakland: Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- [The Center](#), OUSD Central Kitchen, West Oakland: Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- [Weekes Community Center](#), South Hayward: Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- [Coyote Hills Elementary School](#), Newark: Sundays, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- [San Lorenzo High School](#): Wednesdays and Thursdays, 3:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.



Find [vaccine](#) and [testing](#) locations including [West Oakland](#), or [make an appointment](#) by visiting our [website](#). Additional resources on our COVID-19 website include a [ventilation interactive tool](#), guidance for [isolation and quarantine](#), [mask and face coverings](#), [workplace recovery](#), and [community resources](#).

Workplace - Cal/OSHA COVID-19

Following the California Department of Public Health's release of new indoor masking guidance, Governor Newsom signed an executive order updating the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard in keeping with the current

guidance. Masks are no longer required for unvaccinated workers indoors but are strongly recommended for all individuals in most indoor settings. Workers, please note that CalOHSAs requires employers to [provide a face-covering](#) upon [employee request](#). Visit [workplace safety resources and information](#).

REACH Ashland Youth Center Mural Unveiling on E. 14th Street

The REACH Ashland Youth Center recently celebrated the completion of the fifth mural installed on restaurant El Rinconcito Chilango in Ashland. The project is part of the community resilience and transformation work sponsored by the [Alameda County Sheriffs' Office](#) and the Deputy Activities Sheriffs' League with funding



Pictured left to right, Jasmine Quiroga, Jennifer Valadares, Joaquin Newman, Breana Parks

from the [National Endowment for the Arts](#). The Arts and Creativity program at REACH is provided by the social-emotional learning department of the [Alameda County Office of Education](#). This program inspires and informs youth ages 11-24 about the transformative power of arts and creativity by utilizing project-based learning. Teaching public artist Joaquin Newman remarks, "as a public artist, art is a human right, as an educator, art is a student right. Through arts practices, youth cope better from traumas, find alternatives to more risky behaviors and express their identities in positive and supportive ways." Youth artists not pictured are Susana Gonzalez, Greg Duggan, Tiffany King, Terris Ricks, and Quentin Torres.

The [REACH Ashland Youth Center](#) is a program of Alameda County Health Care Services Agency's [Healthy Schools and Communities](#).

Mental Health: The Forgotten Pandemic



Our COVID-19 pandemic experience has impacted the mental health of many residents. Feelings of isolation, loneliness, economic uncertainty, and anxiety increased rates of people struggling with mental health and substance use to unprecedented levels. The CDC reports that over 40% of our fellow citizens struggled with emotional wellness early in the pandemic, experiencing depression, anxiety, trauma, and substance use. Maintaining routines can help people gain a sense of normal during difficult times to improve emotional wellness. Learning to cope with stress will enable an individual, the people they care about, and people around them to become more resilient. Call a health care provider if stress gets in the way of daily activities for several days in a row, and visit these [tips](#) for more information.

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