Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is happening?
There has been an outbreak of a new illness called novel coronavirus, now named COVID-19. While the illness started in China, the situation is quickly changing. There have been cases of COVID-19 in many countries, including in the U.S. related to travel and person-to-person spread. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updates U.S. case counts regularly on Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays. See the current U.S. case count of COVID-19.

What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?
COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus that causes COVID-19 is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and usually cause mild illness, like the common cold.

What is the County of Santa Cruz Public Health Division doing?
The County of Santa Cruz Public Health Division has been working closely with the CDC as well as our state, regional and local partners to manage testing and monitoring of persons who may have been exposed to COVID-19. County Public Health is planning for a sustained response to reduce the impact of the disease, which includes working with partners and advising all sectors of the community to take immediate steps to be prepared.

Am I at risk of getting COVID-19 in the United States?
Your individual risk of getting COVID-19 is based on potential exposure to other cases. This is a rapidly evolving situation and the risk assessment may change daily. The latest updates are available on CDC’s Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) website.

How does COVID-19 spread?
Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. Coronavirus are generally thought to be spread person-to-person through respiratory droplets (e.g., uncovered
coughs). That is why the CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others. To note, it may be possible that a person can get COVID-9 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

What are the symptoms?
Symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included: fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Some people may have pneumonia or more serious illness.

How do I protect myself and my family from getting COVID-19?
1. Get your flu shot to protect against flu, which is now widespread and has symptoms like the ones for COVID-19,
2. Wash your hands with soap and water, rub for at least 20 seconds.
3. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, sleeve or arm. Do not use your hand.
4. Stay home if you are sick with a fever, cough, shortness of breath and are feeling tired.
5. Stay away from large groups of people if possible.

Do I need to wear a mask?
Healthy individuals do not need a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses. A surgical facemask can be worn by those who are coughing or sneezing to protect others from getting sick. Please be aware that surgical masks and N-95s are already in short supply and should be prioritized for use in health care settings.

Should we avoid going to public events?
Please remember that flu and other respiratory viruses are very common right now, and large group gatherings are places where viruses can spread. Remember, if you are not feeling well or are experiencing cold, flu or other symptoms, stay home to avoid spreading germs.

I’m sick. How do I know if it is coronavirus or something else, like the flu?
Call your doctor if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. Tell them if you have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Your doctor will work with the local public health department to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. If you don’t have a doctor, call 211 to find the closest safety net clinic.

Should we cancel travel plans?
At this time, the CDC has issued Level 2 and 3 travel advisories, recommending to avoid all nonessential travel to destinations with level 3 travel notices. For level 2 travel notices, the CDC recommends that older adults or those who have chronic medical conditions consider postponing travel to those destinations. Please check the CDC website for current advisories to other countries: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.
How should I prepare for a community spread COVID-19 in Santa Cruz County?

- Store a two-week supply of food, water, and household goods. Plan accordingly;
- Make sure family and organization emergency preparedness kits are up to date and ready to go. Stocking extra emergency supplies is a good idea;
- Prepare for shortages in medications. Try to obtain two to three months’ supply of critical prescriptions;
- Create plans to care for loved ones at home if they or their caregivers become ill. Do so in a manner that limits spread within the family;
- Use a barrier, such as a paper towel or tissue, to touch common surfaces such as bathroom door handles or elevator buttons.

I’m feeling stressed and overwhelmed, who can I talk to?

An anonymous crisis line is available 24 hours, 7 days a week including holidays at 1-800-704-0900 (Mental Health Services) and/or SAMHSA’s Disaster Distress Helpline 24 hours at 1-800-985-5990 or text TALKWITHUS to 66746 (Press 2 for Spanish).
Nuevo Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Preguntas Frecuentes

¿Qué está pasando?

¿Qué sabemos sobre el nuevo coronavirus?
COVID-19 es un nuevo coronavirus que no ha sido identificado previamente. El virus que causa COVID-19 no es el mismo de los coronavirus que circulan comúnmente entre los humanos y generalmente causan enfermedades leves, como el resfriado común.

¿Qué está haciendo el Departamento de Salud Pública del Condado de Santa Cruz?
La División de Salud Pública del Condado de Santa Cruz ha estado trabajando estrechamente con el Departamento de Salud Pública de California y la Organización Mundial de la Salud (en inglés, World Health Organization ó WHO), y con otras agencias estatales, regionales y locales para administrar las pruebas y el monitoreo de las personas que pueden haber estado expuestas al COVID-19. El Departamento de Salud Pública del Condado está planeando una respuesta sostenida para reducir el impacto de la enfermedad, que incluye trabajar con socios y aconsejar a todos los sectores de la comunidad que tomen medidas inmediatas para estar preparados.

¿Estoy en riesgo de contraer COVID-19 en los Estados Unidos?
Su riesgo individual de contraer COVID-19 se basa en la posibilidad de ser expuesto a otros casos. Esta es una situación que evoluciona rápidamente y la evaluación de riesgos puede cambiar a diario. Las últimas actualizaciones están disponibles en el sitio web de la enfermedad de coronavirus 2019 de los CDC (COVID-19).
¿Cómo se propaga COVID-19?
Alguien que está activamente enfermo con COVID-19 puede transmitir la enfermedad a otros. Generalmente se cree que los coronavirus se transmiten de persona a persona a través de gotitas respiratorias (por ejemplo, tos no cubierta). Es por eso que los CDC recomiendan que estos pacientes sean aislados en el hospital o en el hogar (dependiendo de qué tan enfermos estén) hasta que estén mejor e ya no presenten un riesgo de infectar a otros. Para tener en cuenta, puede ser posible que una persona pueda contraer COVID-9 tocando una superficie u objeto que tiene el virus y luego tocando su propia boca, nariz o posiblemente sus ojos, pero no se cree que este sea la principal forma en que se propaga el virus.

¿Cuáles son los síntomas?
Los síntomas reportados entre pacientes con COVID-19 han incluido: fiebre, tos, escurrimiento nasal y dificultad para respirar. Algunas personas pueden tener neumonía o enfermedades más graves.

¿Cómo protegerse y a su familia contra COVID-19?
1. Obtenga la vacuna contra la gripe para protegerse contra la gripe o síntomas como los del nuevo coronavirus.
2. Lávese las manos con agua y jabón frotando por lo menos durante 20 segundos.
3. Cubra su tos o estornudo con un pañuelo, manga o brazo. No use su mano.
4. Quédese en casa si tiene fiebre, tos, tiene dificultad para respirar y se siente cansado.
5. Intente mantenerse alejado de grandes grupos de personas.

¿Necesito usar una máscara?
Las personas sanas no necesitan una mascarilla para protegerse de las enfermedades respiratorias. Las personas que tosen o estornudan pueden usar una mascarilla quirúrgica para evitar que otras personas se enfermen. Tenga en cuenta que las máscaras quirúrgicas y los N-95 ya son escasos y deben priorizarse para su uso en entornos de atención médica.

¿Debemos evitar ir a eventos públicos?
Recuerde que la gripe y otros virus respiratorios son muy comunes en este momento, y las reuniones de grupos grandes son lugares donde los virus pueden propagarse. Recuerde, si no se siente bien o tiene un resfrió, gripe u otros síntomas, quédese en casa para evitar la propagación de gérmenes.

Estoy enfermo. ¿Cómo sé si es coronavirus u otra cosa, como la gripe?
Llame a su médico si se siente enfermo con fiebre, tos o tiene dificultad para respirar. Infórmale si ha estado en contacto cercano con una persona que se sabe que tiene COVID-19, o si vive o ha viajado recientemente desde un área con propagación continua de COVID-19. Su médico trabajará con el departamento de salud pública local para determinar si necesita hacerse la
prueba de COVID-19. Si no tiene un médico, llame al 211 para encontrar la clínica de red de seguridad más cercana.

¿Debemos cancelar los planes de viaje?
En este momento, los CDC han emitido avisos de viaje de Nivel 2 y 3, recomendando evitar todo viaje no esencial a destinos con avisos de viaje de nivel 3. Para los avisos de viaje de nivel 2, los CDC recomiendan que los adultos mayores o aquellos con condiciones médicas crónicas consideren posponer el viaje a esos destinos. Consulte el sitio web de los CDC para ver las recomendaciones actuales para otros países: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html.

¿Cómo debo prepararme para una propagación comunitaria COVID-19 en el Condado de Santa Cruz?

• Almacene un suministro para dos semanas de alimentos, agua y artículos para el hogar. Planificar en consecuencia;
• Asegúrese de que los kits de preparación para emergencias de la familia y la organización estén actualizados y listos para funcionar. Almacenar suministros de emergencia adicionales es una buena idea;
• Prepárese para la escasez de medicamentos. Trate de obtener un suministro de dos o tres meses de recetas críticas;
• Crear planes para cuidar a sus seres queridos en el hogar si ellos o sus cuidadores se enferman. Hágalo de una manera que limite la propagación dentro de la familia;
• Use una barrera, como una toalla de papel o un pañuelo de papel, para tocar superficies comunes como las manijas de las puertas del baño o los botones del elevador.

Me siento estresado y abrumado, ¿con quién puedo hablar?
Una línea de crisis anónima está disponible las 24 horas, los 7 días de la semana, incluidos los días feriados al 1-800-704-0900 (Servicios de salud mental) y / o la Línea de ayuda de socorro en casos de desastre de SAMHSA las 24 horas al 1-800-985-5990 o envíe un mensaje de texto con TALKWITHUS al 66746 (Presione 2 para español).
March 9, 2020 COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Updated
Interim Workplace Guidance

These recommendations are effective immediately through March 22, 2020 and may be updated before that time upon further evaluation and public health need.

They have been made in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), based on the best information we have at this time. They are also in line with actions taken by other counties and states with community spread of COVID-19.

Alternative Work Arrangements
- Reduce non-essential work-related travel.
- Minimize the number of employees working within arm’s length of one another, including minimizing or canceling large in-person meetings and conferences of about 50 people or more with prolonged close contact.
- Consider options for telecommuting or, if not possible, modified work environment, particularly for employees age 60 or older and/or with underlying health conditions.
- Take steps to minimize workplace risk for employees who must be at work to provide essential services.
- Explore ways to conduct business and provide services that do not require face-to-face contact.

Limit prolonged contact with others
- Post visual alerts at entrances, instructing persons to practice Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette.
  - Cover Your Cough
  - Hand hygiene
  - Stop the Spread of Germs [English, Spanish, Chinese]
- Develop plans to notify clients and customers to stay home if sick and make alternate arrangements such as remaining in car, phone or virtual appointments for their service needs. Postpone or cancel visits when possible and necessary.
- Arrange workplace space to keep arm’s length distance or more for brief interactions between healthy individuals.
- For activities requiring staff to have prolonged close contact with others, consider modifying (via virtual, phone or other means of communication), postponing or canceling the activity if possible.
Mass Gatherings and Large Events
- Events, conferences or meetings, where about 50 or more people will be in close contact should be modified (digital virtual meetings), postponed or canceled.

Stay Home When Sick
- All staff should stay home when sick with fever and/or respiratory symptoms.
- Consider leave options for employees without leave balances.
- Do not require doctor’s notes for sick employees.

Perform Regular Cleaning
- Respiratory droplets on hard surfaces can transfer the virus from person to person. To prevent transmission:
  - Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, faucets, phones, and toys.
  - Immediately clean surfaces and objects that are visibly soiled.
  - If surfaces or objects are soiled with body fluids or blood, use gloves and other standard precautions to avoid coming into contact with the fluid. Remove the spill, and then clean and disinfect the surface.

Encourage Enhanced Hygiene
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60% alcohol content or higher) if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid close contact with other people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or in the crook of your elbow.

For general information on COVID-19 please call 211, or text coronavirus to 211211, or visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus

For department resource requests specific to Covid-19 response, contact the Santa Cruz County Public Health Departmental Operations Center (DOC):

Phone: (831) 454-4444
HSADOC.Coordinator@santacruzcounty.us
FAX: (831) 454-5049
California Department of Public Health (CDPH) workplace guidance links:

- Community care facilities, including assisted living facilities and child care
- Education: Schools (PDF)
- Education: Colleges and universities (PDF)
- Mass Gatherings Guidance - event organizers (PDF)
- First responders, including paramedics and EMTs (PDF)
- Employers
- Health care facilities, including long-term care facilities
- Health care facilities from Cal/OSHA
- Health care workers and workers in general industry
- Home cleaning with COVID-19 positive individuals (PDF)
- Laboratories (PDF)
March 9, 2020 COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) 
Interim Guidance for Social Distancing

These recommendations are effective immediately through March 22, 2020 and may be updated before that time upon further evaluation and public health need.

COVID-19 needs people to spread. Although these measures will cause disruption to the local economy and our daily lives, they are intended to interrupt and slow the spread of the virus and protect overall community health. By limiting opportunities for transmission, we can slow its spread.

Each of us must do our part to protect our older citizens and vulnerable individuals at risk of serious outcomes should they be exposed.

These recommendations have been made in consultation with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), based on the best information we have at this time. They are also in line with actions taken by other counties and states with community spread of COVID-19.

1. Vulnerable Populations: Limit Outings
   - People who are 60 years of age and older. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.
   - People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.
   - For vulnerable populations, don’t go to gatherings (of about 50 people or more) unless it is essential. Avoid people who are sick.

2. Workplace and Businesses: Minimize Exposure
   - Reduce nonessential, work-related employee travel.
   - Minimize the number of employees working within arm’s length of one another, including minimizing or canceling large in-person meetings and conferences of about 50 or more.
   - Urge employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave or other leave benefits.
• Do not require a doctor’s note for employees who are sick.
• Consider use of telecommuting options.
• Some people need to be at work to provide essential services of great benefit to the community. They can take steps in their workplace to minimize risk.

3. Large Gatherings: Cancel Non-essential Events
• Recommend cancelling or postponing large gatherings of about 50 or more, such as concerts, sporting events, conventions or large community events.
• Do not attend any events or gatherings if sick.
• For events that aren’t cancelled, we recommend:
  o Having hand washing capabilities, hand sanitizers and tissues available.
  o Frequently cleaning commonly touched surface areas like counter tops and handrails.
  o Finding ways to create physical space to minimize close contact as much as possible.
• Please see California Department of Public Health Mass Gatherings Guidance (3/07/2020)

4. Schools: Safety First
• If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 at a school, the Santa Cruz County Public Health Division will work with the school and the district to determine the best measures, including potential school dismissal.
• Do not go to school if sick.
• If you have a child with chronic health conditions, consult your doctor about school attendance.
• Equip all schools and classrooms with hand sanitizers and tissues.
• Recommend rescheduling or cancelling medium to large events that are not essential.
• Recommend cancelling field trips.
• Explore remote teaching and online options to continue learning.
• Families should prepare for potential closures.

5. Public and Commercial Transportation: Cleaning and Protection
• Increase cleaning of vehicles paying special attention to commonly touched surface areas.
• Provide hand washing supplies in stations and hand sanitizers and tissues in vehicles.
6. Health Care Settings: Avoid as possible, protect the vulnerable
   - All health care facilities including long term care facilities, must have a COVID-19 plan in accordance with CDPH guidelines.
   - All health care facilities, including long term care facilities, must screen all staff and visitors for illness and turn away those with symptoms.
   - The general public should avoid going to medical settings such as hospitals, nursing homes and long-term care facilities. If you are ill, call your health care provider ahead of time, and you may be able to be served by phone or receive other instructions.
   - Do not visit emergency rooms unless it is essential.

7. Everyone: Do your part
   The best way for all community members to reduce the risk of getting sick, from many illnesses including colds, flu and COVID-19 are:
   - Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
   - Cough or sneeze into the crook of your elbow, not your hand, or use a tissue and discard.
   - Stay home if you are sick.
   - Avoid touching your face.
   - Avoid shaking hands.
   - If you have recently returned from a country, state or region with ongoing COVID-19 infections, monitor your health and follow the instructions of public health officials.
   - There is no recommendation for healthy people to wear masks to prevent themselves from getting sick.

You can also prepare for the possible disruption caused by an outbreak. Preparedness actions include:
   - Prepare to work from home if that is possible for your job, and your employer.
   - Make sure you have a supply of all essential medications for your family.
   - Prepare a childcare plan if you or a caregiver are sick.
   - Make arrangements about how your family will manage a prolonged school dismissal.
   - Plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself.
   - Take care of each other and check in by phone with friends, family and neighbors that are vulnerable to serious illness or death if they get COVID-19.
   - Keep common spaces clean to help maintain a healthy environment for you and others. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly with disinfecting sprays, wipes or common household cleaning products.
For general information on COVID-19 please call 211, or text coronavirus to 211211, or visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus for updates and links to state and federal guidance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

CDC links:

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) links:
Health Care Plans:
- Access to care - Screening & Testing (Department of Managed Health Care - All Plan Letter)
- Access to care - Screening & Testing (California Department of Insurance - Bulletin)

Guidance documentation by category:
- Community care facilities, including assisted living facilities and child care
- Education: Schools (PDF)
- Education: Colleges and universities (PDF)
- Mass Gatherings Guidance - event organizers (PDF)
- First responders, including paramedics and EMTs (PDF)
- Employers and workers
- Health care facilities, including long-term care facilities
- Health care facilities from Cal/OSHA
- Health care workers and workers in general industry
- Home cleaning with COVID-19 positive individuals (PDF)
- Laboratories (PDF)