

Important Note: You won't remember everything shared in this message. So please return to it as often as you need to review the following recommendations.

Message to the community regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Understandably, many are anxious about the COVID-19 outbreak. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that is very contagious and especially threatening to seniors and those with certain types of chronic illnesses such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, or other health problems. With good reason, all of this information may make people feel nervous.

News, the “shelter in place” state order, school closures, and empty supermarket aisles without cleaning or hygiene products can leave us feeling anxious.

The experts at the Public Health Department wish to protect the health of the community. For that reason, school closures and canceling gatherings of 10 or more are necessary safety measures. These are essential steps to protect your health and the health of your family. We need to show our support for these decisions and, more importantly, do what is asked of us.

Let us take a moment to breathe, respond and act with awareness

COVID-19 is very contagious. In California, it is projected that more than 50% of the population may contract COVID-19. If we want to contain the spread, it really does take all of us, and by that, we mean each one of us can do our part. We are a community well positioned to do this. Our community shares a history and practice of coming together in times of need; we collectively are concerned with each other, our families, and the common good. We respond in times of emergency and are good at following instructions and direction given to us by trusted healthcare professionals.

There is a lot of misinformation out there, and it is dangerous to follow misleading information. For example, there are many suggestions about how to tell if you are sick, ways to prevent the virus and home remedies. These are not proven to prevent or kill the virus. Using these remedies or suggestions instead of following the advice of a health care professional puts you, your family, and all of our community at risk.

So what do we do?

Listen to the experts - in particular, your doctor or the Public Health Department. Follow the advice of your trusted medical provider as well as the advice from the national, state, and county health departments.

If we all take some basic steps, we can better protect others and ourselves.

- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently for 20 seconds or more. Do it much more often than what you think is necessary and at least every hour. Your hands are the tools you use for doing almost everything; you touch many things throughout the day. This is the most likely way to contract and transmit the virus to loved ones.
- The more hygienic you can be, the lower your risk of contracting or spreading the virus to others. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has compiled a list of cleaning products that are proven to kill the virus. You can visit the following link: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- If these products are not available, you can use 70% isopropyl alcohol or Clorox bleach with a proportion of 5 tablespoons (equivalent to 1/3 cup) of bleach to a gallon of water; these are the only alternatives that work.
- If possible, maintain 6 ft. of distance between you and others. This keeps you far enough so you are not exposed to another person's coughs or sneezes or from someone accidentally spitting when they speak. If you cannot maintain 6 ft. of distance, at least try to keep as much distance as possible even from your loved ones.
- If you, or someone in your family have symptoms use a facemask. If you don't have a facemask and you are using a bandana or scarf, wash the bandana or scarf frequently with water and soap at least three times a day and more often if you cough a lot.
- Do not shake hands or give hugs even to your loved ones. This is particularly hard, but just remember this is temporary, and by doing this, you will protect yourself and others. Soon you will be hugging and kissing them again and in good health!

It especially means protecting our grandparents who we must convince not to hug or kiss their grandchildren, and will likely argue over it, but remind them it is during a short period that we need to avoid spreading the virus.

- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze using the crook of your elbow. Show everyone in your family how to do this. Doing this helps keep your hands clean and reduces spreading germs since your hands are in constant contact with many surfaces.

Everyone, no matter their immigration status, can access treatment, testing, and care for COVID-19. Medical treatment and preventative services will not count as “public charge”. Ask for the help you need to stay safe and healthy.

Who needs COVID-19 testing?

Not everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19.

Healthcare providers are currently adopting the following criteria:

- Younger, healthy people who present only a mild sickness or minor symptoms may not need to be tested. Follow the instructions of your medical provider, the state's shelter-in-place order, and the recommendations from your county, state, or federal government.

Additionally, testing is may not be necessary for people who are asymptomatic-meaning they have no symptoms.

- Patients who are 60 years and over with medical conditions who are more vulnerable to the virus, as well as pregnant woman who present symptoms, should contact their trusted medical provider to be tested for COVID-19 if their symptoms worsen or if their medical provider recommends it.
- Healthcare workers and persons in public safety occupations such as firefighters, police officers, emergency responders, and patients who have been exposed to an office or institution such as health center, school, correctional facility, homeless shelter, or similar institutions should be tested.

If you are unsure if you should be tested, please contact your trusted medical provider.

What is the difference between social distancing, isolation, and quarantine?

- Social distancing or safe distancing is a practice that should be done daily during the COVID-19 outbreak, by maintaining a sufficiently safe distance from others so that you don't expose or transmit the virus to others through droplets from your cough or sneezes.

It means not shaking hands or hugging so as not to pass germs. It means finding other ways to show your love and greet others. Try to cheer up and lighten the mood in your home by finding new and creative ways to greet each other or to show affection in a fun way that doesn't require touching.

- Quarantine and isolation are used to separate people to control the spread of the virus.
- Isolation separates those who have the virus from those who are healthy. Isolation can be done at home, in a hospital, or a health center.
- Quarantine separates those who have been exposed to the virus but do not yet have symptoms.
- The symptoms of coronavirus can take as long as 14 days to appear.

Am I putting my family at risk if I go to work?

If you are in the category of workers in jobs consider essential such as agriculture, working in a grocery store, pharmacy, bank, gas station, clinics or hospitals, and others, we know that you will continue working and that is why it is even more important to put into practice the following recommendations:

- Do not hug or kiss anyone when you get home from work.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.
- Change your clothes once you arrive home. Separate the clothes you use outside the home from the clean ones you use inside your home. Wash your clothing more often, even after each use, and especially wash what you wear outside.

Am I putting my colleagues or clients at risk if I go to work?

- If you must go to work put into practice safe distancing, ensure that you have 6 ft. between you and other people at work.
- Do not go to work if you have any of the following symptoms and call your doctor:
 - Cough
 - Fever
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Any other cold symptoms

What happens if I have underlying health conditions such as diabetes or other medical conditions? What should I tell my employer?

- If you are in any of the following categories:
 - Seniors (adults over 64 years)
 - People with severe or chronic medical conditions, such as:
 - Heart Disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung Disease
 - Immune Disorder

Consider working from home or make sure that you can maintain a 6 ft. space between you and other people at work. Inform your employer that you have a medical condition that puts you at high risk; they should work with you to keep you safe and healthy.

How do I support my family during the COVID-19 outbreak?

- The government is currently in talks to help small businesses and families., Keep up to date on this topic and visit this link: <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>
- Call 211 to stay informed about resources such as food distribution and other support services near you.
- Public service companies for electricity and water have committed not to shut off services during the outbreak of COVID-19.
- The County of Santa Cruz will put into place an emergency order to protect tenants and renters during the coronavirus crisis.

- School districts such as the Pájaro Valley Unified School District are providing breakfast/lunches for the students. To see the schedule of distribution visit this link: https://www.pvUSD.net/pf4/cms2/news_themed_display?id=1584169584834

Santa Cruz County Office of Education- www.sccoe.link/coronavirus

Monterey County Office of Education-
<https://www.montereycoe.org/resources/alerts/coronavirus/nutrition/>

What will happen if I need to homeschool my children because of school closures?

- News is coming out on how to homeschool and support your children during school closures. Stay up to date for more information on this subject by your school district. <https://sites.google.com/pvUSD.net/pvUSDparentideas/home>

We understand that these are uncertain times and that there are more questions than answers. Because of that, it is vital to stay informed with trusted media outlets. To keep up with the current information regarding the spread of the COVID-19 and how it impacts you, please visit the following links:

<https://www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus>

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>