



Press Release

More than 8% of Contra Costa COVID-19 Tests Now Positive

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Saturday, July 11, 2020

Due to a sharp rise in the percentage of COVID-19 tests returning positive in the community, Contra Costa County today amended its social distancing health order to temporarily tighten face-covering requirements and prohibit indoor gatherings where there is elevated risk of spreading the virus.

Local data show that 8.04 percent of COVID-19 tests administered over the past seven days were positive, a sign that the virus is spreading rapidly in the county and that the community must take immediate steps to reduce the spread of the coronavirus and prevent our healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed.

Contra Costa is especially concerned about the risk of COVID-19 transmission in indoor gatherings, and in gatherings that involve removing face coverings for eating and drinking.

When Contra Costa received authorization (variance) from the California Department of Public Health in June to allow the reopening of some businesses and activities, the plan we submitted indicated that an 8% testing positivity rate would trigger the review and reconsideration of reopening activities in the

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county.

Other indicators show COVID-19 is on the rise in Contra Costa communities. The seven-day average number of new cases identified in the county rose from 38 on June 8 to 146 on July 8, while the seven-day average number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients rose from 17 to 54 during the same period.

The 209 adult intensive care unit beds in Contra Costa County hospitals are on average a little more than half full on a given day, including COVID-19 patients and patients with other health concerns.

Given the rapid spread of local cases, Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) is concerned that the number of patients needing intensive care could quickly exceed capacity.

According to the new health order, indoor worship services are temporarily prohibited, effective on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. Services held earlier on Sunday, July 12, are not subject to this change.

Certain categories of outdoor gatherings, including worship services and social protests, are permitted at any size in Contra Costa so long as state health guidelines are followed, including physical distancing and appropriate use of face coverings.

In outdoor dining settings, staff and customers must now observe face covering requirements at all times, except when putting food or drink in the mouth. The new order also increases guidance for businesses that serve alcohol with meals to better align with state guidelines.

Members of extended family “social bubbles” must now always use face coverings when together, except when putting food or drink in the mouth.

Contra Costa County hopes to ease these enhanced, extraordinary safety measures as soon as possible, and will review available health system data daily to determine when it

is safe to do so.

CCHS urges everyone to continue taking simple steps to protect themselves from COVID-19: Follow the social distancing order, and wear a face covering when you leave home or when you are near other people. Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently, and always stay home from work or school if you are not feeling well.

Visit [cchealth.org/coronavirus \(/coronavirus/\)](https://cchealth.org/coronavirus (/coronavirus/)) to read the new health order, and for local information about Contra Costa's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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