



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## **State Health & Emergency Officials Encourage Individuals at Higher Risk of Severe Illness due to COVID-19 to Take Precautions**

*Older Adults and People with Serious Medical Conditions  
are More at Risk and Encouraged to Stay Home as Much as Possible*

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Public Health is encouraging Californians who are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 to take actions to reduce their risk. Early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults
- Individuals with compromised immune systems
- Individuals who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Lung disease

If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or health condition, it is important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease. Actions you can take to reduce your risk includes:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, or having been in a public place.
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, and stay away from large gatherings and crowds.
- Stay home as much as possible. Consider ways of getting food brought to your house through family, social, or commercial networks.

It is also important that you listen to public health officials who may recommend community actions to reduce potential exposure to COVID-19, especially if COVID-19 is spreading in your community.

For more information visit the [CDC's website](#).

For more information on COVID-19 and California's response visit the [CDPH website](#).

## **COVID-19 in California by the Numbers (as of 7 a.m. Pacific Time):**

133– Positive cases (this does not include passengers from the Grand Princess cruise ship currently off the coast of California)

24 – Cases of positive tests related to federal repatriation flights

109 – Cases not related to repatriation flights

- 44 - Travel-related
- 28 - Person to person
- 19 - Community transmission
- 18 – Under investigation

10,300+ – Number of people self-monitoring who returned to the U.S. through SFO or LAX

49 – Number of local health jurisdictions involved in self-monitoring

19 – Labs with test kits, 17 of which are already testing

## **How Can People Protect Themselves:**

Every person has a role to play. So much of protecting yourself and your family comes down to common sense:

- Washing hands with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover a cough or sneeze with your sleeve, or disposable tissue. Wash your hands afterward.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying away from work, school or other people if you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough.
- Following guidance from public health officials.

## **What to Do if You Think You're Sick:**

Call ahead: If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and may have had contact with a person with COVID-19, or recently traveled to countries with apparent community spread, call your health care provider or local public health department first before seeking medical care so that appropriate precautions can be taken.

## **California's Response to COVID-19:**

We have been actively and extensively planning with our local public health and health care delivery systems. Here are some of the things we are already doing:

- As in any public health event, the California Department of Public Health's Medical and Health Coordination Center has been activated and is coordinating public health response efforts across the state.
- California continues to prepare and respond in coordination with federal and local partners, hospitals and physicians.
- Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency to make additional resources available, formalize emergency actions already underway across multiple state agencies and departments, and help the state prepare for broader spread of COVID-19.
- Governor Gavin Newsom requested the Legislature make up to \$20 million available for state government to respond to the spread of COVID-19.
- California activated the State Operations Center to its highest level to coordinate response efforts across the state.
- 24 million more Californians are now eligible for free medically necessary COVID-19 testing.

- California made available some of its emergency planning reserves of 21 million N95 filtering face piece masks for use in certain health care settings to ease shortages of personal protective equipment.
- The Public Health Department is providing information, [guidance documents](#), and technical support to local health departments, health care facilities, providers, schools, universities, colleges, and childcare facilities across California
- The California Employment Development Department (EDD) is encouraging individuals who are unable to work due to exposure to COVID-19 to file a Disability Insurance claim.
- EDD is also encouraging employers who are experiencing a slowdown in their businesses or services as a result of the Coronavirus impact on the economy to apply for an Unemployment Insurance work sharing program.
- California continues to work in partnership with the federal government to aid in the safe return of 962 Californians from the Grand Princess cruise ship. This mission is centered around protecting the health of the passengers, and ensuring that when the passengers disembark, the public health of the United States, the State of California, and partner communities is protected.
  
- The Public Health Department is coordinating with federal authorities and local health departments that have implemented screening, monitoring and, in some cases quarantine of returning travelers.
- In coordination with the CDC, state and local health departments, we are actively responding to cases of COVID-19.
- The Public Health Department is supporting hospitals and local public health laboratories in the collection of specimens and testing for COVID-19.

The California Department of Public Health's state laboratory in Richmond and 18 other public health department laboratories now have tests for the virus that causes COVID-19. Seventeen of them are currently conducting tests, with the others coming online soon.

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