



Sonoma County
Key Messages: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
December 8, 2022

Key Messages are updated weekly, and used for County messaging to the community. Frequently Asked Questions and other relevant information is available at SoCoEmergency.org.

Vaccine Distribution

Milestones: As of today, 842,616 doses have been administered to Sonoma County residents.

Residents fully vaccinated: 350,114 - equal to 74.4 percent of the county's eligible population.

Residents partially vaccinated: 39,511 - equal to 8.4 percent of the county's eligible population

All California residents 5 and older are now eligible for vaccination against COVID-19. Children ages 5 to 17 can only receive the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. More than 37,000 children ages 5 to 11 in the county are eligible to receive the vaccine. To date, 26.8 percent of the newly eligible children in the county already have received their first dose -- nearly 10,000 children. Clinics at schools are reporting strong demand, which has contributed to a very encouraging start to the county's pediatric vaccine campaign.

The county's top priority is to build on this momentum and get more of our newly eligible children vaccinated and protected. We also remain focused on getting first and second doses administered to get more people fully vaccinated and protected, along with encouraging everyone who is eligible to get a booster shot. Nearly 390,000 residents have received at least one dose -- 78.8 percent of the county's total population. There are 470,488 vaccine eligible residents. That means 82.8 percent of our eligible 5 and older population is now fully or partially vaccinated. By comparison, 69 percent of the eligible California population is fully vaccinated with 8.2 percent partially vaccinated for a total of 77.2 percent. Nationally, 75.7 percent of the eligible population is fully or partially vaccinated.

The County's [vaccine clinics page](#) is continually updated. The [pop-up calendar](#) makes it easy to see what clinics are operating each day. The county's [testing page](#) makes it easy to find a site, book an appointment and

see which sites are accepting walk-ins. The county continues to work with our testing partners to increase the number of testing sites. Testing is widely available and PCR results often are available in 24 hours or less.

Current Sonoma County metrics:

- Our rate of new daily cases per 100,000 population is 9.5.
- Our case rate for unvaccinated individuals is 23 per 100,000 compared with 6.4 for vaccinated residents.
- Our overall testing positivity rate is 3.2 percent.
- Our equity metric testing positivity rate is 3.5 percent.

Update on new cases, hospitalizations and deaths

Public health officials say an increase in cases is to be expected as this is a winter virus, regardless of the variant. We are spending more time indoors, where this virus spreads especially fast. People will be gathering with family and friends over the holidays. That typically means a bump in cases a few weeks after a holiday. Dr. Sundari Mase, the county's health officer, told the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday that we are in "a pretty good place" right now. Cases and hospitalizations have been relatively stable and we have not seen an increase in deaths here. Testing positivity has ticked up but is still low. Dr. Mase said we are "holding tight right now" as health officials wait to see if we have increases after Thanksgiving.

Health officials say it is vital to use our familiar preventive measures to avoid a surge in cases and hospitalizations. We know what works. Get vaccinated and boosted. Wear a mask. Increase ventilation. Get tested. Stay home if you're sick. This remains a pandemic of the unvaccinated, with the unvaccinated accounting for most hospitalizations and nearly all deaths. People who are unvaccinated are 9 times more likely to be infected with COVID in Sonoma County and 40 times more likely to be hospitalized if they get COVID. And they are 16 times more likely to die here from COVID-related illness. Health officials warn that the unvaccinated are putting themselves and others at risk by choosing not to get vaccinated. Dr. Mase also urges everyone to get a flu shot.

- As of Tuesday, 18 COVID patients were in Sonoma County hospitals. This included four in ICU beds.
- Three COVID-related deaths have been reported for November after 11 in October, 25 in September, 38 in August and 17 in July. The two COVID deaths reported last week were unvaccinated residents, a man ages 80 to 90 and a woman ages 40 to 50; both had underlying health

conditions. The county reported one COVID death in May and four in June. Deaths typically lag hospitalizations by a month or more.

- Nearly all of the 414 reported COVID-19 deaths that have occurred in Sonoma County have been unvaccinated residents.
- Vaccines remain powerfully effective against severe illness and death.
- 72 percent of residents ages 16 to 24 are fully vaccinated and 72.9 percent of residents ages 25 to 34. For comparison, 62.7 percent of children ages 12 to 15 are now fully vaccinated, even though they have only been eligible since the middle of May, and 69.6 percent have received at least one dose. Ninety-three percent of county residents 70 and older are fully vaccinated.
- The vaccination rate for ages 12 to 17 has slowed. Officials are encouraging teens who are not vaccinated to get their first dose.
- There have been 4,832 cases of COVID-19 of residents who are fully vaccinated in Sonoma County since vaccinations started. This represents 1.38 percent of fully vaccinated residents.
- The United States has recorded 790,000 COVID-19 deaths. The U.S. is averaging 120,000 new cases a day, a 27 percent increase over the past two weeks, and about 1,300 daily deaths.
- The U.S. Surgeon General has developed a [Community Toolkit for Addressing Health Misinformation](#). It provides guidance and resources for health care providers, educators, librarians, faith leaders, and trusted community members to understand, identify, and stop the spread of health misinformation in their communities.
- A state fact sheet, "Busting Myths," is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

This week's COVID-19 community briefing will include updates on pediatric vaccines and the Omicron variant. The briefing will be [streamed live on Facebook](#) at 4 p.m today (Dec. 8). The briefing will be recorded in Spanish and be available on the [county's YouTube channel](#) on Thursday afternoon.

Update on the Omicron variant

It is important to note that very little is still known about transmissibility, clinical presentation and disease severity, risk of infection and vaccine effectiveness regarding the new variant. We are still dealing with the highly contagious Delta variant in Sonoma County. No cases of Omicron have been reported to date in Sonoma County.

What we know about Omicron and other related information:

- First identified in Botswana and South Africa, this new variant has prompted concern among scientists and health officials because of an unusually high number of mutations that have the potential to make the virus more transmissible and less susceptible to existing vaccines.

- The World Health Organization has called Omicron a “variant of concern” and warned that the global risks posed by it were “very high,” despite what officials described as a multitude of uncertainties.
- The variant has been identified in more than four dozen countries on six continents. Cases have been reported in about 20 U.S. states.
- A San Francisco resident who returned home from South Africa was identified as the first American infected with Omicron. He tested positive on Nov. 29 after returning home Nov. 22. He was fully vaccinated and had mild symptoms. Contact tracers identified all those who had close contact with the infected individual and that so far, all of them had tested negative for the virus.
- The virus is spreading quickly in South Africa, but there are early indications Omicron may cause less serious illness than other forms of the virus. Scientists expect to learn much more in the coming weeks.
- Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government’s top infectious disease expert, on Tuesday said early reports from South African medical officials presented a somewhat hopeful picture of Omicron’s impact. “We shouldn’t be making any definitive conclusions, certainly not before the next couple of weeks,” Dr. Fauci said.
- Pfizer and BioNTech said today that laboratory tests suggest that three doses of their vaccine offer significant protection against the Omicron variant. The companies said that tests of blood from people who received only two doses found much lower antibody levels against the Omicron variant compared with an earlier version of the virus. That finding indicates that two doses alone “may not be sufficient to protect against infection” by the new variant, the companies said. Blood samples obtained from people one month after they had received a booster shot showed neutralizing antibodies against the Omicron variant comparable to those against previous variants after two doses. The results seemed to underscore the importance of booster shots in combating infection from the new variant.
- For context, although Delta turned out to be much more transmissible than prior variants — and there is some data suggesting it can cause more severe illness in the unvaccinated — there is little evidence it is more lethal or capable of outsmarting vaccines.
- The true impact of the virus is not always felt immediately, with hospitalizations and deaths often lagging well behind initial outbreaks.
- Vaccine makers have expressed confidence they can tweak existing formulations to make the shots more effective against new variants. Omicron’s distinctive mutations also make it easy to quickly identify with a nasal swab and lab test.
- Mayor Bill de Blasio announced a sweeping vaccine mandate for all private employers in New York City on Monday to combat the spread of the Omicron variant. The measure takes effect Dec. 27. Employees

who work in-person at private companies must have one dose of the vaccine by Dec. 27; remote workers will not be required to get the vaccine. There is no testing option as an alternative.

President Biden's pandemic strategy

President Biden announced a new pandemic strategy last week. Many experts predict a surge in the U.S. over the winter, regardless of how widely Omicron spreads. The highlights of Biden's plan:

Testing:

- Over-the-counter rapid tests will soon become a much bigger part of the Biden administration's response. The White House announced on Thursday that private health insurers would soon have to reimburse patients for such tests. It also said it would make 50 million free tests available for uninsured Americans, to be distributed through health clinics and other sites in rural and underserved communities.
- For consumers who have insurance, the White House approach will require some legwork. It left some health policy experts questioning why the United States does not purchase tests on behalf of all Americans and provide them at little to no cost, as some European countries have done. Instead, Americans will have to buy tests and then submit the receipts for reimbursement under the current plan.
- Private insurers already cover the cost of coronavirus tests administered in doctor's offices or other medical facilities.

Travel:

- The United States began requiring international travelers on Monday to provide proof of a negative test taken no more than a day before their flights. The move is intended to limit the spread of the new variant.
- Previously, fully vaccinated travelers could provide proof of a negative test taken within 72 hours of departure. While this likely will create another layer of stress for some travelers, results for rapid antigen tests are normally available within a few hours.
- Unvaccinated Americans and children under 18 must take a test within 24 hours of travel. That requirement has not changed.
- There is no testing requirement for flying domestically. Biden did extend the mask mandate for people on airplanes, buses and trains and in terminals and transit hubs through mid-March.
- More than a dozen countries around the world, including the United States, have taken another step and barred travelers who have recently been in any of eight southern African countries.

Trust texts from 23393

California has produced a video informing residents that if they receive a text from the number 23393, it's an important message from California's COVID-19 response team and their local health department. Calconnect, the contact tracing database, uses a virtual assistant to reach out to COVID cases and contacts by text prior to them being called by a contact tracer/case investigator. The video is also available in Spanish.

Update on Sonoma County's pediatric vaccine campaign

The county's pediatric vaccine campaign is off to an encouraging start as nearly 27 percent of the eligible children ages 5 to 11 have received at least one dose since vaccines became available in early November. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their pediatrician or a local pharmacy to find a vaccine for their children now that the CDC has endorsed the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 5 to 11. Pharmacy appointments can be made through Myturn.ca.gov.

More than 40 vaccination clinics will be held at designated schools throughout the county to serve people who do not have convenient or affordable access to healthcare providers. A list of upcoming clinics is on the Sonoma County Office of Education website along with information for parents. Doses for those 12 and older also will be available at those clinics.

Sonoma County public health leaders, doctors, health care clinics, schools, pharmacies and community groups are working together to educate families about the vaccine's safety and benefits and to ensure vaccines are distributed as quickly, safely and equitably as possible.

County health and education leaders are working to answer parents' questions about the pediatric vaccine and address their concerns. Webinars in English and Spanish were held by county Health Services and the Sonoma County Office of Education to give parents an opportunity to ask questions and hear from other parents. Both webinars are available for viewing on the county's YouTube channel in English and Spanish.

- The county's pediatric vaccine campaign is being planned with a focus on equity. The sites for school-based clinics are in areas with recent high case rates, a high number of English learners, and with lower vaccination rates. Those doses are intended for those school populations but no one will be turned away who is eligible for a vaccine. Our health equity team is seeking additional input on sites.
- All doses will be available at no cost to children or their parents.
- Parents are asked to bring a photo ID with date of birth as well as medical and prescription insurance card (if insured). Nobody will be turned away for lack of ID.

- Consent forms will be required if a child is not with a parent or guardian; consent forms are available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- The County Office of Education's goal was to vaccinate a quarter of the 37,000 children aged 5 to 11 by Dec. 1. The campaign seeks to vaccinate half by Jan. 31, and 70 percent by Feb. 28.
- The FDA authorized the Pfizer vaccine for 12- to 15-year-olds in May; 69.6 percent of that age group in Sonoma County has now received at least one dose of the vaccine.
- While severe illness due to COVID-19 is rare among children, they can become very sick.
- As of Dec. 2, 7 million children have tested positive for COVID-19. More than 133,000 child cases were added the past week, the 17th week in a row, child COVID-19 cases are above 100,000. Since the first week of September, there have been nearly 2 million additional child cases, according to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).
- Dr. Brian Prystowsky, a local Sutter Health pediatrician, [explains the benefits of the pediatric vaccine](#) in this video.
- Vaccine testimonials by local parents of children who received the pediatric vaccine are [now available](#) on the county's YouTube channel.
- California has produced five new [videos](#) with facts on COVID-19 vaccine safety, including the pediatric vaccine.

Surgeon general: Mental health crisis among young people

Young people are facing "devastating" mental health effects as a result of generational challenges that include the pandemic, the U.S. surgeon general warned on Tuesday. Dr. Vivek H. Murthy, the nation's top physician, made the public advisory [in a 53-page report](#) noting that the pandemic intensified mental health issues that were widespread by spring 2020.

- The report cited significant increases in self-reports of depression, anxiety and emergency-room visits for mental health challenges.
- U.S. emergency room visits for suicide attempts rose 51 percent for adolescent girls in early 2021 as compared to the same period in 2019. The figure rose 4 percent for boys.
- Globally, symptoms of anxiety and depression doubled during the pandemic. Mental health issues were already on the rise in the United States, with emergency room visits related to depression, anxiety and related issues up 28 percent from 2007 to 2018.

Guidance for holiday gatherings, travel

People who are not vaccinated should avoid travel and holiday gatherings, Sonoma County Health Officer Dr. Sundari Mase said, citing guidance from

the California Department of Public Health. Residents planning to travel should make sure they have documents required by some destinations, airlines and events to prove their vaccination or testing status. Other recommendations to stay safe over the holidays include:

- Get a booster if you are 18 or older and it has been at least six months since you completed your Pfizer/Moderna vaccine series or at least two months since you received a Janssen vaccine.
- Keep indoor gatherings small.
- If everyone at an indoor gathering is fully vaccinated, masks are optional.
- If your guests are unvaccinated or you don't know their status, plan gatherings that are small, short and outdoors.
- Wear a mask when you might be around unvaccinated people, especially indoors.
- Wear a mask when around older individuals or people with medical conditions.
- When gathering inside, ventilate well. Open doors and windows, run HVAC systems, and make sure high-quality air filters are installed.
- Get tested if you have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Some destinations and events require a COVID-19 test or proof of vaccination. Research the requirements of your airline, destination or event to ensure you are prepared. Before scheduling your test, check with your test provider to see if they meet the required result certification and timelines for your travel, destination or event. Don't wait until the last minute to schedule an appointment. Arriving at a gate without acceptable test results can cost you time and may result in you missing your flight or event. [CDC guidelines for travel can be viewed here.](#)

You can obtain a digital copy of your California vaccine record from [my vaccine record.cdph.ca.gov](https://my.vaccine.record.cdph.ca.gov). If there are problems with the digital vaccine record, they can take two to three weeks to fix. Keep your paper CDC card in a secure place; make copies and save pictures on your phone. If you have lost your card and your digital record gives you an error, ask your primary care provider to provide you with a copy of your immunization record.

County Communications Team's COVID outreach efforts to date

The messaging and outreach by the county's Communications Team related to COVID-19 reflects the breadth and depth of the county's response to the pandemic. Here's a summary of this year's communications efforts through November.

- Community briefings: 64 COVID updates via Zoom have been streamed live on Facebook. The hourlong briefings are now done in English and followed the next day by a briefing in Spanish. They are recorded and made available on the county YouTube channel.
- Posters and flyers: 1,044 English and Spanish pieces, including 568 vaccination flyers, 334 testing flyers, 100 other flyers and 34 clinic and office signs.
- Social media posts: 484 English and Spanish postings, including 322 social messages and graphics, plus 36 FAQs and 126 community briefings, with an average reach of 600,000 per month.
- Advertisements: 56 English and Spanish ads designed and distributed on print, digital and radio platforms, reaching an average of 1.2 million impressions per month.
- Press releases: 152 in English and Spanish.
- Testimonial videos: 34 videos in English and Spanish recorded and distributed on social and with community based organizations.

Spanish communications are a key focus of county government's commitment to equity and outreach to the Latinx community. Since May, outreach in Spanish includes:

- 27 weekly 30-second public service announcements; scripts are produced and supplied to several radio stations.
- 5 monthly Indigenous language 30-second public service announcements for KBBF 89.1 FM (Triqui, Chatino, Mixteco). Produce text in Spanish and send for translations and audio production.
- 88 radio interviews with local stations, most in the form of weekly or bi-weekly updates.
- 22 television interviews (all via Zoom).
- 39 community forums as participants.
- 50 bi-weekly bilingual community email updates (Actualización comunitaria). Updates include COVID resources, vaccination and testing sites, and special events. More than 150 stakeholders receive this email.

Update on expanded guidance for booster shots in Sonoma County

Prompted by concerns about the Omicron variant, the CDC on Nov. 29 said that all American adults "should" get booster doses of the available coronavirus vaccines. The CDC had previously said that Americans over age 50, as well as those ages 18 and older living in long-term care facilities, "should" get booster shots while all other adults "may" decide to do so based on their individual risk. Sonoma County has opened up COVID-19 boosters to all adults 18 years and older. Anyone 18 or older can choose either a

Pfizer or Moderna booster six months after their last dose. For anyone who got the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the wait already was just two months. And people can mix-and-match boosters from any company. Other key information regarding booster shots:

- Individuals should contact their primary care doctor, local pharmacy or visit [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://www.myturn.ca.gov) to schedule a booster shot. Vaccine supplies may be limited at the county's fixed and pop-up clinics.
- 104,854 boosters have been administered in Sonoma County since they were authorized for higher-risk groups in September.
- 52,754 boosters have gone to seniors ages 65 and older, or 63.1 percent of that age group.
- More than 52,000 booster doses have been administered to residents under age 65.
- The CDC reports that 47.9 million fully vaccinated people have received an additional vaccine dose in the United States.
- The Moderna booster is half the size of the primary dose administered.
- Pfizer on Nov. 30 asked federal regulators to authorize a booster shot of their vaccine for 16- and 17-year-olds. If approved, the shot would be the first booster available to people under 18.

Vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 authorized by federal regulators

The CDC on Nov. 2 endorsed the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children ages 5 to 11. The children will receive one-third of the dose authorized for those 12 and older, delivered by smaller needles and stored in smaller vials to avoid confusion with adult doses.

- The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine to receive emergency use authorization so far for those ages 5 to 11.
- A second dose will be necessary, three weeks after the first.
- About 28 million U.S. children are eligible for the vaccine, including 37,185 in Sonoma County.
- Tens of thousands of children have been hospitalized with COVID, and 740 have died, according to data collected by the CDC.
- Some children who are infected may go on to develop long COVID, remaining ill for months, or multisystem inflammatory syndrome, which has affected at least 5,973 children in the United States.
- The Food and Drug Administration on Aug. 23 granted full approval to Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine for people 16 and older, making it the first vaccine to move beyond emergency use status in the United States.

Vaccination delivery strategy

The County and its health partners are collaborating to make vaccines available where and when it is most convenient and where they are most needed. Outreach is crucial as we work to address vaccine hesitancy and other issues that have kept some from getting vaccinated. The county's [vaccination calendar](#) is continually updated. Residents who need help making an appointment can call the hotline at 707-565-4667 in English and Spanish.

In addition to pop-up clinics, multi-day clinics include:

- Sutter operates a daily clinic at 2360 Mendocino Ave. in Santa Rosa from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- The Roseland Community Center clinic is operated by Fox Home Health at 779 Sebastopol Road. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (ages 5-plus)
- The Rohnert Park Community Center clinic at 5401 Snyder Lane is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for ages 12-plus; 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. for ages 5-11 only. Appointments needed.
- Alliance Medical Center's clinic at 1381 University Ave. in Healdsburg is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Appointment needed. (ages 5-plus) (707) 433-5494
- Fox Home Health also operates a clinic Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 1400 N. Dutton Ave., Suite 17, Santa Rosa.
- Rohnert Park Health Center operates a clinic at 5900 State Farm Dr. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 1:45 (ages 12-plus) and 3 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. (ages 5-plus); on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. (ages 12-plus) and 1:30 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. (ages 5-plus). No appointment needed for first, second or booster doses, though you can make one at (707) 559-7500.
- Petaluma Health Center's clinic at 1179 N. McDowell Blvd. is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and 1:30 to 4:45 p.m. Ages 12-plus. No appointment needed for first, second or booster doses, though you can make one at (707) 559-7500.
- Sonoma Valley: Sonoma Valley Health Partners is holding clinics at multiple sites, including at schools. Go to svhpvaccines.org for details.

Testing updates, including local availability

Testing is widely available throughout the county. Residents are encouraged to make use of testing before family and other gatherings over the holidays. PCR test results often are available in 24 hours. The County Department of Health Services continues to work with our testing partners, LHI, Curative, Molecular Matrix and Fox Home Health, to make testing available in more cities across the county on more days. Appointments are suggested but walk-ins are accepted at many sites. Changes to the county's [testing](#)

page, which include a map, make it easier to find a convenient site. Residents can call the hotline at 707-565-4667 (4701 in Spanish) for help making an appointment.

PCR tests remain the “gold standard.” If the PCR test is positive, county health staff can help residents navigate the next steps. People should not consider themselves “safe” if they are asymptomatic and receive a negative result from a rapid antigen test and should also get a PCR test. Self-administered rapid tests are available through non-partner providers and at pharmacies. The county is working to expand the availability of rapid tests. The White House announced on Thursday that private health insurers would soon have to reimburse patients for over-the-counter rapid tests. It also said it would make 50 million free tests available for uninsured Americans, to be distributed through health clinics and other sites in rural and underserved communities.

Use the county’s pop-up testing calendar to find a site.

Fox Home Health: Walk-ins OK; 707-573-0223 x101 for an appointment.

- 1400 North Dutton Ave., Suite 17; Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Testing added to the vaccine clinic at the site. Visit FoxHome
- Roseland Community Center, 779 Sebastopol Road, Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Molecular Matrix: Make an appointment at the Molecular Matrix website.

- Petaluma’s Foundry Wharf, 625 Second St., Petaluma, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Petaluma Valley Baptist Church, 580 Sonoma Mountain Pkwy., Thursdays and Fridays, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Andy Lopez Unity Park, 3399 Moorland Ave., Santa Rosa, Mondays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Redemption Hill Church, 2100 Petaluma Hill Road, Santa Rosa, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

LHI: Appointments are highly recommended at <https://lhi.care/covidtesting> or call 866-284-8788. LHI offers testing from 7 a.m. to 7p.m. at:

- Cotati Park and Ride, St. Joseph Way at Highways 116 and 101, Tuesdays and Wednesdays
- Petaluma Valley Baptist Church, 580 Sonoma Mountain Pkwy., Tuesdays, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Galvin Park, 3330 Yulupa Ave., Santa Rosa, Thursdays.
- Salvation Army, 721 S. McDowell Blvd., Petaluma, Fridays

- A Place to Play Park, 2375 W. 3rd St., Santa Rosa, Fridays
- Alliance Medical Center, 1381 University Ave., Healdsburg, Saturdays
- Knox Presbyterian Church, 1650 W. 3rd St., Santa Rosa, Saturdays
- West County High School, 6950 Analy Ave., Sebastopol, Sundays

Curative: Appointments are preferred, walk-ins are welcome; call 888-702-9042. Testing is available at these locations. Several sites have expanded their hours:

- Coddington (Target lot), 1000 Coddington Center, Santa Rosa, every day, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. cur.tv/coddington
- Fiesta Plaza, 200 Siesta Way, Sonoma, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. cur.tv/fiestaplaza
- Windsor Bluebird Center, 25 Bluebird Dr., Sunday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. cur.tv/windsor
- Rohnert Park Community Center, 5401 Snyder Lane, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. cur.tv/rohnertpark
- New Life Christian Fellowship, 1315 Rand St., Petaluma, Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- West County Community Health Center, 652 Petaluma Ave., Sebastopol, Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. cur.tv/sebastopol
- Healdsburg Community Center, 1557 Healdsburg Ave., Mondays, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. cur.tv/healdsburg
- Cloverdale High School, 509 N. Cloverdale Blvd., Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. cur.tv/cloverdale
- West County Community Services, 15010 Armstrong Woods Road, Guerneville, Wednesdays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. cur.tv/west
- Resurrection Parish, 303 Stonypoint Road, Santa Rosa, Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. cur.tv/resurrection
- Geyserville Elementary School, 21485 Geyserville Ave., Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. cur.tv/geyserville
- Sonoma Park and Ride, Highway 12 and Thompson Avenue, Boyes Hot Springs, Sundays, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. cur.tv/boyes

On-site COVID-19 testing is available for businesses, health centers, congregate facilities, faith-based or community-based organizations or schools that would like to offer testing. They can partner with California's COVID-19 Testing Task Force to set up testing. To find out more, visit the task force's [Get Started](#) page. For local help with your organization's testing questions, email questions or requests to COVIDTest@sonoma-county.org.

The California Department of Public Health has created a [fact sheet](#) to help Californians understand when they should get tested for COVID-19.

- Get tested immediately for COVID-19 if you are feeling any symptoms – regardless of vaccination status. COVID-19 symptoms can feel like a common cold (including just “the sniffles”), seasonal allergies, or flu.
- If you’ve been exposed to COVID-19 and are not fully vaccinated, get tested right away. If you test negative, retest five to seven days after your exposure date.
- If you were fully vaccinated, you should get tested three to five days after close contact with someone who tested positive.
- If you have recovered from COVID in the last three months and have had no new symptoms since your recent exposure, you do not need to get tested.

Self-quarantine instructions if you’ve been exposed to COVID-19

California has produced an [updated fact sheet](#) summarizing self-quarantine instructions for individuals exposed to COVID-19. Fact sheets are available in numerous languages on the [COVID-19 Guidance in More Languages](#) page.

Update on cases in local schools

The county, in collaboration with the Sonoma County Office of Education, is implementing measures to keep our schools as safe as possible. There have been 1,096 COVID-19 cases in schools in the county since classes started in August. Of these cases, 964 are students and 132 are staff members. The county is posting [school cases and other related data online](#).

- Under California’s [guidance](#), students are required to wear a mask indoors, along with adults while sharing indoor spaces with students. Universal masking means that classrooms and schools will not be closed for a few cases.
- The California health department has a new resource -- navigating the COVID-19 exposure decision tree for K-12 schools. The [fact sheet](#) (in English and [Spanish](#)) helps individuals know when they should access COVID-19 testing, and when they should isolate and quarantine following symptoms and/or possible exposure at school
- California has updated its [K-12 Schools Guidance](#) and [Schools Guidance Q&A](#) with modifications to quarantine protocols and new information on school-based extracurricular activities.

Volunteers needed to help with pediatric vaccination campaign

Sonoma County is seeking volunteers to assist with our pediatric vaccination mission. We are looking for people with Spanish interpretation abilities to

assist parents and families at school clinics as well as health care providers who can help clinically with vaccine administration and answer vaccine questions. Volunteers should be friendly, compassionate, and able to assist with greeting, registration and general vaccine help at vaccination clinics. There are multiple dates, times and locations throughout the months of December and January that volunteers are needed. Most shifts are three to four hours, in the afternoon, with a few Saturdays. Multicultural and multilingual community members are preferred. This is an easy way to help protect our children. See our [vaccination clinic calendar](#) for event dates and locations and [sign up through our partner](#).

County updates guidance for trips for school and youth sports

The county on Nov. 1 [updated its guidance](#) regarding travel for school and youth sports. Current evidence supports that fully vaccinated individuals can safely participate in many activities that they did before the pandemic, including that fully vaccinated individuals are less likely to get and spread COVID-19 and [can now travel at low risk](#) to themselves within the United States. School officials and youth sports organizations planning overnight group trips and excursions for fully vaccinated adults and students should still consider implementing the following strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 infection in youth sports and overnight trips. School officials and youth sports organizations should verify that all participants, including students, athletes, teachers, coaches, chaperones, and volunteers, are fully vaccinated. Students, staff, and volunteers must wear masks indoors and in shared vehicles while on field trips and travel to sporting events and competitions with the following exceptions:

- The organizer (teacher, coach) has verified that all individuals present are fully vaccinated.
- There are no more than 100 individuals present, and the group present gathers on a regular basis (e.g., classroom, sports team).
- The host or organizer can control access to the setting, and the setting is not open to the public or others not in the class or team cohort.

For additional requirements see the county's Oct. 21 [amended health order](#).

Bay Area health officers issue criteria for lifting mask mandate

Sonoma County on Oct. 14 joined most other Bay Area counties in [establishing criteria](#) that must be met before the indoor masking requirements are lifted. It could be early January before those benchmarks are met in Sonoma County. The benchmarks require:

- That the county reach the moderate COVID-19 transmission tier, as defined by the CDC, and stay there for at least three weeks. That would be fewer than 50 cases each week per 100,000 population. The county is averaging about 65 new cases per week per 100,000 population.
- That COVID-19 hospitalizations are low and stable, in the judgment of the county health officer.
- That 80 percent of the county's total population be fully vaccinated or eight weeks have passed since a COVID-19 vaccine has been authorized for emergency use for 5- to 11-year-olds. The eight-week benchmark will be triggered at the end of the year.

Sonoma County allows some groups to go maskless indoors

Sonoma County Health Officer Dr. Sundari Mase on Oct. 21 amended a health order to allow certain stable groups of people, such as those in gyms, classes and offices, the option of lifting the mandate on wearing masks indoors if they verify that all members of the group are fully vaccinated for COVID-19. The move adds an additional exception to the order requiring face coverings in all indoor public settings, which Dr. Mase issued Aug. 3 to help control the surging Delta variant. The exception is voluntary, so employers, hosts, and organizers may continue to enforce universal indoor masking, regardless of vaccination status. Highlights of the order:

- The amendment applies to indoor gatherings of 100 or fewer people including in offices, gyms, fitness centers, employee commuter vehicles, religious gatherings, college classes, and other organized gatherings of individuals who meet regularly.
- Employers, hosts, and organizers must control access to the setting, and the setting cannot be open to the general public.
- FAQs provide more information

California to mandate vaccines for children 12 and older for school

California will enact the nation's first coronavirus vaccine mandate for school children, Gov. Gavin Newsom said on Oct. 1. The goal is to have all students in seventh through 12th grades vaccinated by next fall once the shots gain final federal approval for everyone 12 and over. The Pfizer vaccine is being administered under an emergency authorization for those ages 12 to 15. The state will require students in kindergarten through sixth grades to get the vaccine once final federal approval comes for ages 5 to 11. County officials expect that means the mandate will not impact this school year. California has mandated since 1995 that school-aged children be vaccinated against 10 vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles, mumps and polio.

FDA OKs monoclonal antibody treatment for children under age 12

The Food and Drug Administration on Friday authorized Eli Lilly's monoclonal antibody treatment for infants and children under age 12 with COVID-19 who are at high risk of becoming severely ill from the virus because they have a condition such as obesity or diabetes. Previously, high-risk COVID patients 12 or older had been eligible to get the drugs, which are typically administered intravenously at a clinic or hospital and have been shown to lower the risk of hospitalization and death. Hospitalizations of children with COVID soared over the summer during a surge in Delta cases.

Vaccination orders and guidance

County Health Officer Dr. Sundari Mase expanded the scope of an Oct. 1 health order requiring workers at certain health care and congregate facilities to get vaccinated against influenza. Nov. 30 was the deadline for compliance with the requirement. The original health order required workers at certain health care and congregate facilities to get vaccinated against influenza. Dr. Mase also issued a strong recommendation that the public, including first responders, get an influenza vaccine this flu season.

All of Sonoma County's COVID-related health orders and guidance can be found at socoemergency.org/emergency/novel-coronavirus/health-orders/

- The county on Sept. 24 issued a public health recommendation for safely holding public meetings. Virtual online meetings are strongly recommended as they present the lowest risk of transmission of COVID. At in-person public meetings, masks are still required.
- Sonoma County on Sept. 3 issued a health order that requires home health workers and pharmacists in the county to show proof of vaccination or undergo regular testing. The health order applies to all businesses and governmental entities. The order took effect Sept. 24.
- Sonoma County on Aug. 4 issued a health order calling for all fire, law enforcement and emergency medical service workers and staff at disaster shelters to show proof of vaccination or undergo weekly testing. This mandate took effect on Sept. 1.
- County supervisors voted Aug. 17 to extend the proof of vaccination requirement to all 4,470 county workers.
- Santa Rosa's policy requiring its 1,500 city employees to be vaccinated or undergo weekly testing went into effect Oct. 1.
- Santa Rosa Junior College mandated that all faculty, trustees and students who plan to be on campus had until Oct. 15 to verify they are vaccinated, or test weekly.
- Sonoma State University requires verification of vaccination from students. There is no testing option.

- California requires that all state workers and workers in health care and high-risk congregate settings show proof of full vaccination or be tested. Workers in health care settings must have been vaccinated by Sept. 30. Healthcare Worker Vaccine Requirement.

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Sonoma County has expanded financial support available to tenants and landlords through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. It is easier to apply now and people can get help navigating the process in English and Spanish. Applicants can apply on SoCoEmergency.org/ERAP, by calling 2-1-1 for an operator to assist in English and Spanish or by visiting the online page for a list of organizations that can assist in applying. Other key information:

- The program provides payment assistance for tenants who are behind on rent and utilities. It also provides options for landlords to participate and receive financial assistance.
- This program is open to all residents, regardless of immigration status.
- As of Nov. 15, the county has distributed \$18.8 million to community based organizations handling applications for assistance. Of that amount, \$16.9 million has been distributed to applicants.
- Tenants are encouraged to apply because changes to the program have made it easier to qualify, including the use of self-attestation.
- The expanded program removed the limit of one application per household, removing restrictions on applications from roommates.
- Individuals also can apply for 100 percent of utility bills to be paid.
- Tenants may apply for a total of 18 months worth of rental support.
- In addition to the increase in payments for past-due and upcoming rent, individuals will be able to apply for financial assistance for moving costs, hotel stays during transitions and security deposits.

Complaints received for health order on face coverings

Permit Sonoma's Code Enforcement unit has received 248 complaints about public health violations across Sonoma County and its cities regarding the public health order requiring face coverings in workplaces and public settings since it was reinstated in early August. No citations have been issued for violations that the county is aware of. A breakdown of the complaints received as of Nov. 22:

- 78.2 percent of the complaints (194) have been for businesses, not including gyms/fitness centers.
- 18.5 percent of those complaints (46) have been for gyms/fitness centers.

- 92 percent of complaints were about employees and/or customers not wearing masks.
- 4 percent of complaints were about potential positive COVID-19 cases or exposures.

Code Enforcement receives all complaints made by the public through the Safe707 phone line and email, as well as COVID complaints made via SoCo Report-It. Complaints outside of Code Enforcement's jurisdiction are referred to the appropriate partner agency. All complaints within Code Enforcement's jurisdiction are investigated by a Code Enforcement inspector, who visits the property and provides information on the current public health order. People are welcome to file non-emergency complaints via the Safe707 phone line and email, or via SoCo Report-It.

- Call: (833) SAFE707 (1-833-723-3707)
- Email: safe707@sonoma-county.org
- Online: [SoCo Report It](#)

The county has jurisdiction over complaints in unincorporated areas. A jurisdictional breakdown of the complaints:

- Sonoma County -- 46 complaints
 - 36 complaints were referred to Code Enforcement
 - 7 complaints were referred to County Health
 - 3 complaints were referred to County Environmental Health
- 63 complaints referred to Santa Rosa
- 38 complaints referred to Petaluma
- 30 complaints referred to Rohnert Park
- 20 complaints referred to the city of Sonoma
- 20 complaints referred to Cotati
- 11 complaints referred to Sebastopol
- 10 complaints referred to Healdsburg
- 7 complaints referred to Windsor
- 3 complaints referred to Cloverdale

FDA expected to authorize antiviral pills to treat high-risk cases

An expert committee on Nov. 30 recommended that the FDA authorize a COVID pill from Merck for high-risk adults, the first in a new class of antiviral drugs that could work against a wide range of variants. The drug, known as molnupiravir, has been shown to modestly reduce the risk of hospitalization and death, predominantly from the Delta, Mu and Gamma variants. The panel recommended it for COVID patients who are older or have medical conditions that make them vulnerable to severe illness. The pill could be authorized soon in the United States and be available by year's end. The

FDA also may also authorize a similar pill from Pfizer that appears to be significantly more effective than Merck's.

- Merck's pill was 50 percent effective when given within five days of the onset of symptoms.
- Pfizer's pill cut the risk of hospitalization or death by 89 percent when given within three days after the start of symptoms. Including people who began treatment on the fourth or fifth day, the pill reduced the risk of hospitalization or death by 85 percent.
- The Pfizer and Merck pills are expected to reach many more people than monoclonal antibody treatments, which are more expensive and usually given by intravenous infusion at a clinic.
- Doses of the drugs distributed by the federal government would go to states and patients at no cost.
- The treatment consists of 30 pills given over five days.
- Pfizer's drug is in the class of so-called protease inhibitors that are commonly used to treat HIV and hepatitis C.

Pandemic's impact on life expectancy in Sonoma County

Life expectancy decreased 2.1 years in 2020, compared to the 2017-2019 average, for Latinx residents in Sonoma County compared to 0.7 years for white, non-Hispanic residents. The differences in life expectancy and the disproportionate impact on the Latinx community illustrate why equity is such an important part of the County of Sonoma's vaccine strategy.

- The premature death rate from COVID-19 was almost 10 times higher for Latinx residents (409.4 per 100,000 population compared to 42.64 per 100,000 for white, non-Hispanic residents).
- COVID was responsible for 7 percent of all premature lives lost for Latinx residents compared to 1 percent for white, non-Hispanic residents.
- COVID contributed to 12 percent of total deaths for Latinx residents compared to 3 percent for white, non-Hispanic residents.

Resources and useful links for residents and business owners

- Free COVID-19 testing is available for tribal communities at Sonoma County Indian Health Project. Call 707-521-4500 for details.
- Listos California offers disaster preparedness information in indigenous languages at its [Farmworkers Initiative](#) webpage.

Information for businesses is available at [SoCoLaunch.org](https://www.socolaunch.org).