

SCHOOL SAFETY DURING COVID-19



COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE UPDATES

On March 12, 2022, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released a new update for the COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools in California. Updates include changes to masking and quarantine recommendations. In addition to the main guidance, updates were also made to the Group-Tracing Approach to Students Exposed to COVID-19 in a K-12 setting.

Ongoing research continues to provide a greater understanding of COVID-19. The foundational principles of this guidance continues to focus on keeping all K-12 schools safely open for in-person for all children. Since the return of in-person instruction, California schools have been able to weather two COVID-19 surges and move forward, looking towards long-term prevention and the collective responsibility to create safe in-person school through the next phase of mitigation measures.

To mitigate in-school transmission, it is crucial to continue implementing a multi-layered approach. This includes but is not limited to being up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations, wearing a mask, staying home when sick, getting tested when needed and optimizing indoor air quality of school facilities. CDPH continues to apply

recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools will continue to be reviewed regularly by CDPH.

Masks remain one of the most effective and simplest safety mitigation measures in reducing transmission of COVID-19. As of March 12, the use of masks shifted from required to strongly recommended. Prior to the change, Dr. Mark Ghaly presented the below table indicating the updated masking guidance for California. [Optimal masks](#) are ones that are high quality, with good fit and filtration. These qualities provide optimal protection to the person wearing the mask as well as optimal source control protecting those around the wearer. At this time for best protection, CDPH and Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) strongly recommend continuing to mask indoors in school settings to best protect students and staff.

CDPH updates will take effect April 6:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/K-12-Guidance-2021-22-School-Year.aspx>

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| | | REQUIRED | STRONGLY RECOMMENDED | RECOMMENDED | OPTIONAL |
|---------------------------|--|----------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Vaccinated & Unvaccinated | Public Indoor (Effective end of day February 28) | → | ✓ | | |
| | Schools & Childcare (Effective end of day March 11) | → | ✓ | | |
| | Health Care | ✓ | | | |
| | Long-Term Care | ✓ | | | |
| | Jails & Prisons | ✓ | | | |

NOTE: Locals may have additional requirements beyond the state requirements based on local conditions including community vaccine rates or vaccination rates in schools and childcare facilities.

GROUP CONTACT TRACING

In January, CDPH introduced the concept of group contact tracing. At that time, schools were encouraged to consider this quarantine strategy. In the newest version of the K-12 guidance, CDPH strongly encourages schools to begin the transition to the group-tracing strategy. CDC no longer recommends universal case investigation and contact tracing in the school setting. The organization recommends implementing appropriate mitigation measures as well as broad notification of potential exposure to COVID-19. **The main three components of group tracing include:**

- Notify students who spent more than a cumulative total of 15 minutes (within a 24-hour time period) in a shared indoor airspace (e.g., classroom) with someone with COVID-19 during their period of infectiousness.
- Exposed students, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, should get tested for COVID-19 with at least one diagnostic test obtained within 3-5 days after last exposure, unless they had COVID-19 within the last 90 days.
- Exposed students may continue to take part in all aspects of K-12 schooling, including sports and extracurricular activities, unless they develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.

SECOND ROUND OF FREE AT-HOME COVID TEST KITS

- Every home in the U.S. is now eligible to order four additional free at-home COVID-19 tests, through the second round of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Postal Service program. The tests are shipped directly to your address through the Postal Service. Californians are encouraged to order tests now so they have them when they need them. Visit The Postal Service (USPS) Website to order.
<https://www.covid.gov/tests>

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF COVID-19 TESTS?

PCR Test

- Most sensitive test currently available.
- Analyzed in a laboratory.
- Results in typically in 24-72 hours so take precautions as if you are positive until you receive your results

Rapid Antigen Tests

- Helpful to get faster results when feeling sick or as a precaution before gatherings.
- Less sensitive than PCR tests. If you test within the first couple days of infection when you may have a lower amount of virus in your body, the test may not detect the virus. This is called a “false negative”. Your test may say you are negative when you may be positive. If you continue to have symptoms, it is best to re-test.
- Results in as little as 15 minutes.
- Can be done at home with an at-home testing kit

If you have symptoms are that are worsening—especially if you are older or have underlying medical conditions and are at risk for severe COVID-19—you should consult with your health provider regardless of test results.



SACRAMENTO COUNTY FREE TESTING LOCATIONS CAN BE FOUND AT:

<https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Pages/Symptom-Screening-MobileTestingSite.aspx>





MULTISYSTEM INFAMMATORY SYNDROME IN CHILDREN

According to CDPH, children and teens under 21 can develop Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C), a rare but serious illness, up to 8 weeks after having COVID-19. Symptoms of MIS-C include **ongoing fever** plus more than one of the following:

- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Skin rash
- Bloodshot eyes
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

Emergency signs of MIS-C that require immediate medical care include:

- Trouble breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest that does not go away
- New confusion
- Inability to wake up or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds (depending on skin tone)

Children with MIS-C get inflammation, or irritation, in different parts of the body ("organ systems") up to eight weeks after being infected with SARS-CoV-2. This inflammation can occur whether the child did or did not have symptoms of COVID-19. Organ systems that can be affected by MIS-C can include: the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, and/or gastrointestinal organs. Because it is caused by SARS-CoV-2, MIS-C is a new condition that was first reported in April of 2020. Children and teens can get MIS-C during or after having COVID-19, the best way to protect them from MIS-C is to take everyday actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your home and community. This includes vaccinating children against COVID-19. Be aware of the signs of MIS-C and learn more from CDPH's MIS-C websites:

[MIS-C Disease Page](#), [MIS-C Data Page](#), [Don't Miss the Signs of MIS-C Flyer](#), [MIS-C Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#), and [MIS-C Communications Toolkit](#).

VACCINES FOR YOUTH AGES 5-17

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and free. It is strongly recommended that everyone age 5 and older be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations. This includes completing the primary series and a receiving a booster dose when eligible. Vaccinating children can help protect family members who are at increased risk for getting sick if they are infected with COVID-19, such as elderly family members or those who are moderately or severely immunocompromised. Furthermore, it can help protect the youngest family members who are not yet eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Vaccination can help keep kids in school and safely participate in group activities. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been authorized for children ages 5 – 15 and approved for teens 16 – 17.

COVID-19 vaccine dosage varies by age on the day of vaccination.

- Youth ages 12 years and older receive the same dose as adults
- Children age 5 through 11 receive a half dose.
 - The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children contains the same active ingredients as the vaccine given to adults and youth 12+.
- A second shot of the vaccine should be administered three weeks after the first dose.

Based on data from clinical trials, the COVID-19 vaccine has been proven safe and effective for children. All vaccines continue to be rigorously monitored.

- People have [rarely experienced severe health effects](#) after COVID-19 vaccination. To learn more about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/safety-of-vaccines.html>
- Children may experience side effects like pain and swelling at the injection site, or headache, chills and fever. These symptoms should go away in a few days.

VACCINE & BOOSTER APPOINTMENTS

Individuals age 12 and older who received their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine at least 5 months ago, or 18 and older who received the second dose of the Moderna vaccine at least five months ago, or the J&J vaccine two months ago, should [get their booster](#) dose. Booster doses are not yet recommended for children ages 5 – 11.

To make an appointment visit [MyTurn.ca.gov](https://myturn.ca.gov). Here, anyone who is eligible for vaccination in California can schedule free appointments and get additional information on available resources. If you would like to view a pop-up COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic Locations in Sacramento County, visit <https://dhs.saccounty.gov/PUB/Pages/Vaccination-Clinic-Locations.aspx>. At this time, some locations are providing \$25 or \$50 gift cards (depending on location) for individuals receiving their 1st or 2nd dose.

WHY WILL SOME PEOPLE GET A SECOND BOOSTER DOSE?

On March 29, 2022, the CDC updated booster dose guidance to expand eligibility for some people to get a second vaccine booster. Adults age 50 and older and some immunocompromised individuals are now eligible to get a second Pfizer or Moderna booster dose at least 4 months after their first booster (whether they received a Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson booster). Older adults—especially those with underlying medical conditions—and people with compromised immune systems are at higher risk of severe COVID-19, and are among those most likely to benefit from the additional protection of a second booster shot.

The emergence of the Omicron variant and subvariant BA.2 underscores the importance of vaccination, boosters, and preventive efforts to protect against COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be highly

effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death. CDC recommendations on booster doses are based on the latest data, which show that booster doses significantly increase protection from the Omicron variant, with the goal of ensuring that people have optimal protection against COVID-19 infection, severe illness, and death.

IF WE NEED A BOOSTER DOSE, DOES THAT MEAN THE VACCINES AREN'T WORKING?

COVID-19 vaccines are working well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, but the latest data show that booster doses significantly increase protection against the Omicron variant. The latest CDC recommendations on booster doses help to ensure more people across the U.S. are better protected against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated and boosted if eligible—particularly for groups that are more at risk for severe COVID-19, such as older people and those with underlying medical conditions.

QUESTIONS?

The Sacramento County COVID Hotline can be reached at (916) 875-2400. It is staffed Monday-Friday between 8am and 5pm. If a volunteer is not available, please leave a message and someone will return your call as soon as possible.

If you would prefer to email, send general COVID-19 questions to COVID19@saccounty.net
If you have COVID-19 vaccine related questions, email COVID19vaccine@saccounty.net



Visit [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) the American Academy of Pediatrics website to get more information for families about the COVID-19 vaccine.