



SONIA Y. ANGELL, MD, MPH  
State Public Health Officer & Director

# State of California—Health and Human Services Agency California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM  
Governor

Released June 18, 2020

- Revised on June 29, 2020 to clarify that children under two years old are exempt from wearing face coverings due to risk of suffocation

## GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS

Because of our collective actions, California has limited the spread of COVID-19 and associated hospitalizations and deaths in our state. Still, the risk for COVID-19 remains and the increasing number of Californians who are leaving their homes for work and other needs, increases the risk for COVID-19 exposure and infection.

Over the last four months, we have learned a lot about COVID-19 transmission, most notably that people who are infected but are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic play an important part in community spread. The use of face coverings by everyone can limit the release of infected droplets when talking, coughing, and/or sneezing, as well as reinforce physical distancing.

This document updates existing [CDPH guidance](#) for the use of cloth face coverings by the general public when outside the home. It mandates that face coverings be worn state-wide in the circumstances and with the exceptions outlined below. It does not substitute for existing guidance about social distancing and handwashing.

### Guidance

People in California must wear face coverings when they are in the high-risk situations listed below:

- Inside of, or in line to enter, any indoor public space;<sup>1</sup>
- Obtaining services from the healthcare sector in settings including, but not limited to, a hospital, pharmacy, medical clinic, laboratory, physician or dental office, veterinary clinic, or blood bank;<sup>2</sup>
- Waiting for or riding on public transportation or paratransit or while in a taxi, private car service, or ride-sharing vehicle;
- Engaged in work, whether at the workplace or performing work off-site, when:
  - Interacting in-person with any member of the public;
  - Working in any space visited by members of the public, regardless of whether anyone from the public is present at the time;

<sup>1</sup> Unless exempted by state guidelines for specific public settings

<sup>2</sup> Unless directed otherwise by an employee or healthcare provider



- Working in any space where food is prepared or packaged for sale or distribution to others;
- Working in or walking through common areas, such as hallways, stairways, elevators, and parking facilities;
- In any room or enclosed area where other people (except for members of the person's own household or residence) are present when unable to physically distance.
- Driving or operating any public transportation or paratransit vehicle, taxi, or private car service or ride-sharing vehicle when passengers are present. When no passengers are present, face coverings are strongly recommended.
- While outdoors in public spaces when maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet from persons who are not members of the same household or residence is not feasible.

*The following individuals are exempt from wearing a face covering:*

- Persons younger than two years old. These very young children must not wear a face covering because of the risk of suffocation.
- Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering. This includes persons with a medical condition for whom wearing a face covering could obstruct breathing or who are unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
- Persons for whom wearing a face covering would create a risk to the person related to their work, as determined by local, state, or federal regulators or workplace safety guidelines.
- Persons who are obtaining a service involving the nose or face for which temporary removal of the face covering is necessary to perform the service.
- Persons who are seated at a restaurant or other establishment that offers food or beverage service, while they are eating or drinking, provided that they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from persons who are not members of the same household or residence.
- Persons who are engaged in outdoor work or recreation such as swimming, walking, hiking, bicycling, or running, when alone or with household members, and when they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet from others.

- Persons who are incarcerated. Prisons and jails, as part of their mitigation plans, will have specific guidance on the wearing of face coverings or masks for both inmates and staff.

**Note:** Persons exempted from wearing a face covering due to a medical condition who are employed in a job involving regular contact with others should wear a non-restrictive alternative, such as a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, as long as their condition permits it.

## **Background**

*What is a cloth face covering?*

A cloth face covering is a material that covers the nose and mouth. It can be secured to the head with ties or straps or simply wrapped around the lower face. It can be made of a variety of materials, such as cotton, silk, or linen. A cloth face covering may be factory-made or sewn by hand or can be improvised from household items such as scarfs, T-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels.

*How well do cloth face coverings work to prevent spread of COVID-19?*

There is scientific evidence to suggest that use of cloth face coverings by the public during a pandemic could help reduce disease transmission. Their primary role is to reduce the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including someone who has COVID-19 but feels well. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing, washing hands, and staying home when ill, but they may be helpful when combined with these primary interventions.

*When should I wear a cloth face covering?*

You should wear face coverings when in public places, particularly when those locations are indoors or in other areas where physical distancing is not possible

*How should I care for a cloth face covering?*

It's a good idea to wash your cloth face covering frequently, ideally after each use, or at least daily. Have a bag or bin to keep cloth face coverings in until they can be laundered with detergent and hot water and dried on a hot cycle. If you must re-wear your cloth face covering before washing, wash your hands immediately after putting it back on and avoid touching your face. Discard cloth face coverings that:

- No longer cover the nose and mouth
- Have stretched out or damaged ties or straps
- Cannot stay on the face
- Have holes or tears in the fabric

# COVID-19

- COVID-19 Home
- CA COVID-19 Response

## COVID-19 Lines for County Public Health Offices

County	Telephone #	County	Telephone #
Alameda	(510) 268-2101 or 211	Orange	(800) 564-8448
Alpine	(530) 694-2235	Placer	(530) 889-7141
Amador	(209) 223-6407	Plumas	(530) 283-6337
Butte	(530) 552-4000 or 211	Riverside	(951) 358-5416
Calaveras	(800) 754-8889	Sacramento	(916) 875-5881
Colusa	(530) 458-0380	San Benito	(831) 637-5367
Contra Costa	(925) 313-6120 or 211	San Bernardino	(800) 782-4264 (Option 6)
Del Norte	(866) 961-2889	San Diego	211
El Dorado	(530) 621-6100	San Francisco	311 or sf.org
Fresno	(559) 600-3200 or 211	San Joaquin	(209) 468-3400
Glenn	(530) 934-6588	San Luis Obispo	(805) 543-2444 (Call Center) or 211
Humboldt	(855) 707-9355 or 211	San Mateo	211
Imperial	(442) 265-1444 or 211	Santa Barbara	(805) 681-5488 (Option 8) or 211
Inyo	(760) 873-7868	Santa Clara	211
Kern	(661) 321-3000 or 211	Santa Cruz	(831) 454-4114

Kings	(559) 584-1401 or 211	Shasta	(530) 225-5594 or 211
Lake	(707) 263-1090	Sierra	(530) 283-4333
Lassen	(530) 251-8183	Siskiyou	(530) 841-2134
Los Angeles	211 <a href="http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus">publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus</a>	Solana	(707) 784-8988 or 211
Madera	(559) 675-7893 (Option 2) or 211	Sonoma	211 <a href="http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Home">sonomacounty.ca.gov/Home</a>
Marin	(415) 473-4163 or 211	Stanislaus	(209) 558-7535 or 211
Mariposa	(209) 966-3689 (Option 1) or 211	Sutter	(530) 749-7700
Mendocino	(707) 234-6052	Tehama	(530) 527-6824 or 211
Merced	(209) 710-6085 or 211	Trinity	(530) 623-8209
Modoc	(530) 233-6311	Tulare	(800) 283-9323 or 211
Mono	(760) 924-1830	Tuolumne	(209) 533-7401
Monterey	(831) 755-4521	Ventura	(805) 465-6650 or 211
Napa	(707) 253-4270	Yolo	(916) 375-6380 or 211
Nevada	(530) 265-7154	Yuba	(530) 749-7700