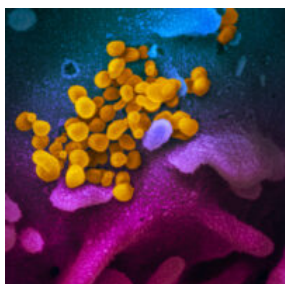


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COVID-19 AND HIV UPDATES

OCTOBER 14, 2020



The SARS-CoV-2 virus
(NIAID)

We are working together to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). Below are this week's East Bay COVID-19 and HIV updates. This page is usually updated on Wednesday evenings by [Sophy S. Wong, MD](#) with data and resources gathered from many collaborators in [Alameda County](#), [Contra Costa County](#), [Solano County](#), [CA state](#).

MASKS

GUIDANCE

RESOURCES & LINKS

ARCHIVES

PDF SUMMARY

Click on these links for [masks and face](#)

[coverings](#), [guidance on prevention, testing and wellness](#), [resources and links](#), [archived weekly updates](#) and the [weekly PDF summary](#). [East Bay HIV service organizations](#) are providing services by phone and/or video.

KEY UPDATES FOR THIS WEEK:

East Bay strategic planning process: Our [next meeting on writing the strategic plan](#) will be held on Friday, October 23, 10-11:30 am. Please join us. Your voice is important. Please register for the meeting [here](#).

2020 Election: It's happening now! Complete and submit your ballot if you haven't already done so.

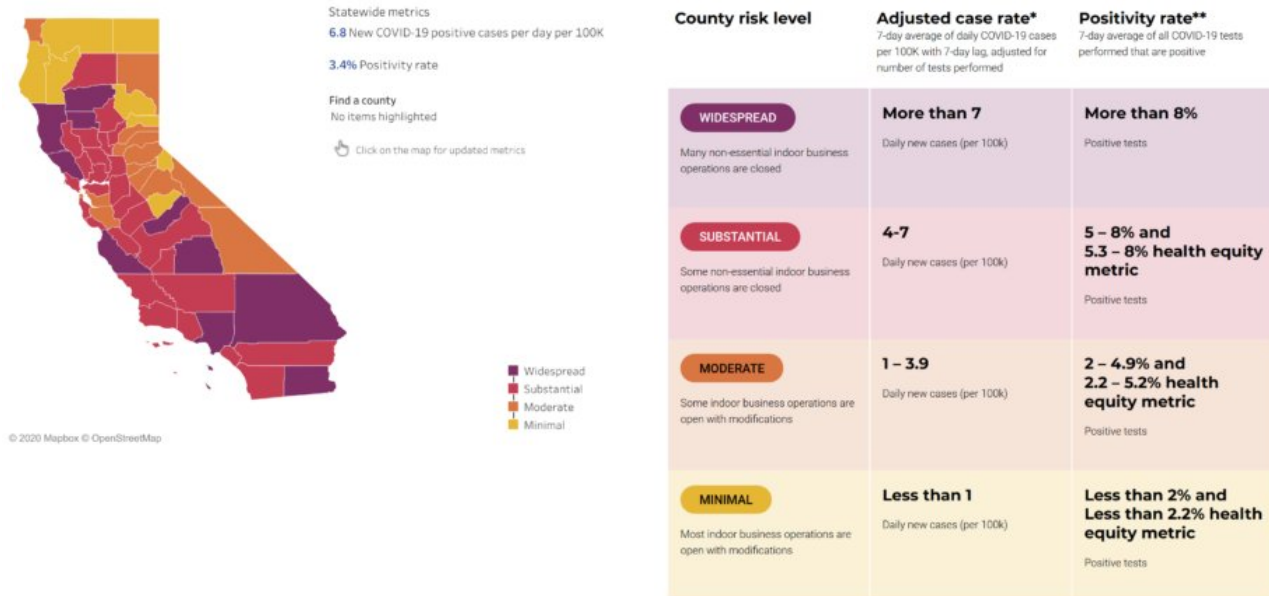
- Track your ballot status [here](#).
 - For official ballot drop-off and early in-person voting locations in CA, click [here](#).
- Further details are below.

Even the **New England Journal of Medicine** has spoken out about the importance of voting in their editorial "[Dying in a Leadership Vacuum](#)": "Anyone else who recklessly squandered lives and money in this way would be suffering legal consequences. Our leaders have largely claimed immunity for their actions. But this election gives us the power to render judgment."



EAST BAY COVID-19 UPDATES

On October 14, Alameda County moved into the orange tier ("moderate" risk), while Contra Costa and Solano Counties remain in the red tier ("substantial" risk) in California's [Blueprint to Safer Reopening](#). These trends show stabilization and decreases in the East Bay after summer surges. Fall surges in Europe and other parts of the US remind us to remain vigilant with precautions.



county must remain in a tier for a minimum of three weeks and meet all 3 targets for the next tier for at least two weeks before being able to advance to a less restrictive tier. Counties can only move one tier at a time.

[Contra Costa](#) and [Solano Counties](#) are following [state allowances](#) for reopenings, including the allowance for school reopenings and indoor activities at reduced capacity. [Alameda County](#) is reopening at a slower pace around indoor activities and has [prioritized](#) the reopening of elementary schools that are ready and complete a [COVID-19 health and safety reopening plan](#). School reopening plans vary by school district and individual schools.

[Current estimated transmission rates](#) are 0.94 in Alameda County, 0.90 in Contra Costa and 1.01 in Solano County, compared to 0.97 statewide. Our goal is to keep transmission rates less than 1 so that cases decrease.

Our collective efforts to wear masks, maintain physical distance, test and isolate/quarantine are crucial for limiting illness and death.

ALAMEDA COUNTY:

- [Orange “moderate” tier](#) week 1.
- [3.4 new cases](#) of COVID-19 per day per 100,000 residents (down from 4.0 last week for the unadjusted new case rate).
- [1.5%](#) test positivity rate countywide (down from 2.0%).
- [3.2%](#) test positivity in the lowest quartile [Healthy Places Index](#) (HPI) census tract (down from 3.9%).
- [22,325 cumulative cases](#) and 442 deaths.
- [63 hospitalized patients](#) (highest was 213 on 7/28), including 19 ICU patients (highest was 73 on 8/20) with confirmed COVID-19.
- [0.94 transmission rate](#) on the updated [Cal-CAT](#) model (up from 0.88).

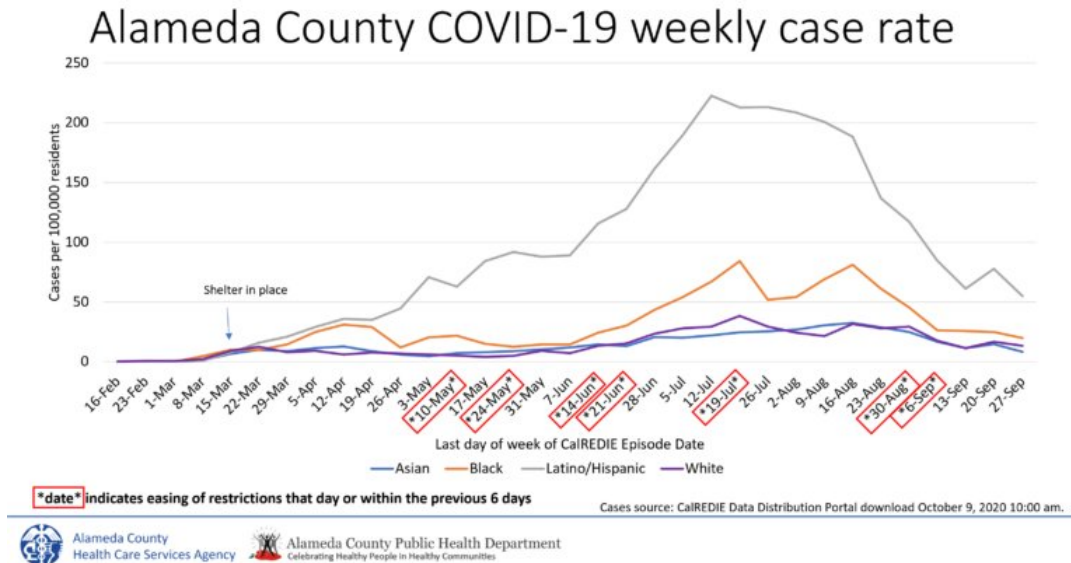
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY:

- [Red “substantial” tier](#) week 3.
- [4.5 new cases](#) of COVID-19 per day per 100,000 residents (down from 6.2).
- [2.4%](#) positivity rate (down from 3.3%).
- [4.9%](#) test positivity in the lowest quartile HPI census tract (down from 6.8%).
- [0.90 transmission rate](#) (down from 0.94).

SOLANO COUNTY:

- [Red “substantial” tier](#) week 4.
- [5.9 new cases](#) of COVID-19 per day per 100,000 residents (up from 5.6).

- [2.6%](#) positivity rate (down from 2.8%).
- [3.0%](#) test positivity in the lowest quartile HPI census tract (up from 2.9%).
- [1.01 transmission rate](#) (down from 1.04).



Case trends by race/ethnicity in Alameda County show that there have been declines in all groups since August, with the most pronounced declines among Latinx people and some narrowing of disparities (see graph). Weeks marked by red rectangles in the horizontal axis indicate when reopenings were allowed. The rapid increase in cases in June and July reflect the major reopenings in late May through June. Given the major reopenings allowed in September and October, these case trends will be monitored closely in 4-6 week increments to determine whether it's safe enough for additional activities to reopen.

California state will be distributing [rapid COVID-19 antigen test kits](#) to counties in the next month. Alameda County will receive 30,000 test kits and prioritize distribution to safety net emergency departments, urgent care clinics, community health centers, jails, long-term care facilities and other congregate settings. It's currently unclear how often and how many more kits will be distributed by the state after this batch.

A [joint Bay Area statement on Halloween and Día de Los Muertos](#) offers guidance to avoid high risk activities such as trick or treating and parties and tips on celebrating safely by keeping it small and keeping it at home. [CDC guidelines on Halloween and Día de los Muertos](#) have also been released.

[New guidance on private gatherings was released](#) by the California Department of Public Health, allowing outdoor private gatherings of up to three separate households provided masks and physical distancing protocols are met. This includes gatherings at public parks. The fewer people and households involved and the shorter the time period, the less risk of COVID transmission. Indoor gatherings with people outside of an immediate household are still strongly discouraged.

Over the summer Alameda County partnered with eight youth-serving organizations to host a **youth-led COVID-19 health promotion and prevention messaging contest** for people ages 13-24. People who live and/or work in Alameda County may [vote](#) before October 15. Entries with the most votes will be recognized by the Board of Supervisors and have their work shared featured in county messaging campaigns.



NEW HIV AND COVID-19 STUDIES

"Innovations in HIV care delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic: Policies to strengthen the Ending the Epidemic Initiative – A Policy Paper of the Infectious Diseases Society of America and the HIV Medicine Association" ([Armstrong, et. al.](#)) reports that the pandemic has severely reduced in-person visits. At one large Boston health center, nearly 75% fewer people initiated PrEP between January and April 2020.

The pandemic has also "accelerated growth of alternative options, bolstered by additional funding support," including services that are more patient-centered, accessible, collaborative and less bureaucratic, such as:

- Telehealth: providing greater flexibility for accessing care. HIV clinics have found significant drops (~50%) in no-show rates compared to the previous year.
- Medication access: increased refill flexibility to 60-90 days and early refills, suspension of co-pays and prior authorizations, delivery to homes.
- Flexibility in access to Ryan White (RW) services: state and local jurisdictions allowing for electronic/e-mailed RW certification and attestation forms, flexibility in the timing of annual certification, PrEP-DAP in some states.

The authors write, "As the pandemic wanes, long term policy changes are needed to preserve these options for those who benefit from them," including:

- Adequate and ongoing reimbursement for both phone and video visits from all third-party payers.
- Healthcare systems adopting approved and accessible platforms for telehealth visits with adequate staff to assist patients with use.
- Ryan White including telehealth as core medical service and funding to support smartphone, tablet, data plans and tech training for patients and staff.
- States to allow expert HIV providers to practice telehealth across state borders and without additional licensing barriers to increase access for PLWH in areas lacking expert HIV providers.
- Permanent medication policies that allow 60-90-day medication fills, early refills, waiving some or all co-pays, and mail delivery which also waives signature requirements and delivery to secure boxes or alternate locations for those with unstable housing or inflexible work schedules.
- New lab and insurance policies allowing for patient-obtained swabs and dried blood spots, mail-in test kits.
- PrEP-DAP (PrEP Drug Assistance Programs) expansion to other states.
- HRSA should not allow states and local jurisdictions use more restrictive policies than the federal Ryan White requirements, which many have. Ryan White programs should continue to allow electronic certification, margins of error and flexible timing to facilitate rapid enrollment and ART.
- Evaluation of these practice changes to assess impact and improve outcomes.

"Advancing Digital Health Equity: A Policy Paper of the Infectious Diseases Society of America and the HIV Medicine Association" ([Wood, et. al.](#)) reports on the "digital divide" in telemedicine, including these findings:

- Video vs. phone visits: There are significant disparities in completing video visits rather than phone visits. People identified as female, low income (<\$50k/year), age above 60, Black or non-English speaking have been found to be less likely to complete video visits instead of phone visits during the pandemic.
- Non-English proficiency was associated with 50% less video or phone visits.
- The authors identify 4 digital health access points: technology, technical literacy, broadband connectivity and personal privacy (e.g. location, use of headphones).
- The authors recommend to assess each person's readiness for telemedicine in the 4 areas above and support those who can't connect.
- They also recommend to track, study and understand disparities and needs.
- Policy recommendations include:
 - the expansion of broadband internet;
 - programs that offer smartphones, tablets, laptops and headphones;
 - programs and staff who can assess and support/teach technical literacy;

- provision of multilingual platforms and interpretation services;
- provision of HIPAA-compliant communication besides the EHR portal (e.g. texting platforms);
- clinic/panel-level tracking of people who miss visits with analyses of disparities and responsive outreach processes.

A COVID-19 outbreak at a spin studio/gym in Canada has resulted thus far in 44 patrons infected and 17 additional cases of household contacts of patrons. While the studio in Hamilton, Ontario and public health rules require masks while off the spin bikes, it does not require patrons to wear masks while on the bikes, which are spaced 6 feet apart. Gyms are at higher risk for transmission because people take off their masks while exercising, breathing at a higher rate and more deeply, and often talking loudly.







Our **summary of [COVID harm reduction strategies](#)** is constantly updated with new studies.

Free COVID testing sites: [Click here for Alameda County, Contra Costa County](#) and [Solano County testing sites](#).

To stay safe during wildfire season and the pandemic, we all need to:

- [Wear face coverings](#) when in public and within 30 feet of others,
- Wear non-medical N95s when unable to stay indoors during times of unhealthy air quality,
- Maintain at least six feet distance from others,
- Sanitize or wash hands frequently, and
- Stay home when sick.

COVID-19 harm reduction strategies: Use as many of these as you can!

Strategy	% reduction
 1. Masking	60-95%
 2. Distancing	53-88%
 3. Eye protection	78%
 4. Stay outdoors	~95% in one case series
 5. Hand hygiene	28-45%
 6. Testing/isolation	33%

Updated 8.17.20 * Data compiled by Sophia S. Wong, MD
Icons by Good Ware, Freepik and Srip on Flaticon.com
Please see [EBGTT.org/resources](#) for the complete list of sources for this table.

2020 ELECTION: MORE DETAILS AND GUIDANCE

- [Click here](#) to check your registration status or register to vote.
- You can vote as soon as you receive your ballot.
- Fill the ballot out using blue or black ink, and put it in the return envelope.
- Sign your name on the back and seal the envelope.

Voters who can return their ballots early will help ensure safe physical distancing at voting locations. [Voting locations](#) will offer voter registration, replacement ballots, accessible voting machines, and language assistance. **There are many options for voting early and safely!**

- Drop off at official ballot boxes: Drop off your completed, signed ballot at one of the official drop box locations: Alameda County [locations](#), and Contra Costa County [locations](#). This is recommended as the safest option.
- Mail: Put it in the mailbox. No stamps are necessary.
- Drive-through: voters in Alameda County can also drop off their ballots at the courthouse at 1225 Fallon St in downtown Oakland. [Click here for more drive-through info](#).
- In-person: You can also bring your ballot to a voting location, or go to one for in-person registration and voting.
 - In Alameda County, 1225 Fallon St in Oakland has been open and [more voting locations](#) will be open October 31 to November 3 across the county.
 - In Contra Costa County, the Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder-Elections Office in Martinez has been open, and more [voting locations](#) will be open October 30, 31 and November 2 across the county.
 - In Solano County, the Solano County Registrar of Voters in Fairfield [has been open](#) for early voting, ballot drop-off and registration.
- After you submit your ballot, [click here](#) to check your ballot status

OTHER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Resources for supporting clients:

- **Generic Truvada:** Teva Pharmaceuticals (makers of generic Truvada) now has a copay card available [here](#). It pays up to \$600 a month, but is only for people with insurance (and won't work with Medicare, which bans copay cards). The Gilead copay card and free drug programs are still available, as is the federal Ready Set PrEP program. Teva has an exclusive agreement with Gilead to sell the generic for six months. Any generic manufacturer will be allowed to sell their generic starting in April of 2021, when we will likely see prices fall.
- **Black TRANS** (Training Resisting Advancing Never Settling) University is a new 12-week stipend-supported program created by Black trans people for Black trans people at the **Oakland LGBTQ Center** in collaboration with Tranz of Anarchii Inc. Learn more [here](#).

Resources for agencies/advocates:

- CDC's Capacity Building Branch has released a **Toolkit for Providing HIV Prevention Services to Transgender Women of Color**. It is a technical assistance guide that community-based organizations and similar organizations can use to support their HIV prevention services for transgender women of color. Learn more about it [here](#).
- Newsletter: **California Department of Public Health – Office of AIDS'** October 2020 newsletter OAVoice is [here](#).
- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC) has announced the availability of fiscal year 2021 funds for community-based organizations to develop and implement high-impact HIV prevention programs. The Notice of Funding Opportunity focuses on addressing the national HIV epidemic by reducing new infections, increasing access to care, and promoting health equity. Learn more about the opportunity [here](#).

Funding opportunities:

- The **CDC's** Notice of Funding Opportunity is still open. Applications are due on November 20th. Learn more about the opportunity [here](#).

Job opportunities:

- **La Clinica de la Raza** is looking to hire a Street Outreach Worker. The individual in this position will conduct rapid HIV testing and provide referrals. Learn more about the opportunity [here](#).
- **IRC Oakland** is looking for a Financial Coach to join its Economic Empowerment team. IRC Oakland's Economic Empowerment programming connects individuals to employment and asset-building opportunities to lead them down the path of self-sufficiency. Learn more about the opportunity [here](#).

Trainings, webinars & virtual events:

- **Training video on Alameda County Housing services:** [In this recording](#), Colleen Budenholzer covers the housing Coordinated Entry system, a streamlined system designed to efficiently match people experiencing homelessness to available housing, shelter, and services. Participants will learn about points of entry and services for clients, housing problem solving, and the documents needed for housing services.
- PTBI Collaboratory: California Preterm Birth Initiative will be holding a special Collaboratory "**Communities as the Compass: When communities are the North Star**" on October 23rd from 1-2:30pm. Learn how health research initiatives centered community wisdom to evolve their missions, leadership teams and research strategies to focus anti-racism and drive positive, sustainable change for the organization and most importantly the communities they serve. More information can be found [here](#).
- **Positive Change II – Dismantling Racism in the HIV Workplace** is a virtual conference to be held on Thursday, October 29 and Friday, October 30. The purpose is to both inform the HIV workforce and to reflect and strategize on the roles that leaders, communities and our organizations play in perpetuating structural racism and white supremacy. Speakers include Drs. Camara Phyllis Jones, Tonia Poteat, Sheldon Fields and Russell Brewer. Register for the event [here](#).

- The [UCSF Medical Management of HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 conference](#) will be livestreamed December 10-12. [More info here.](#)

HIV services during COVID-19: [Click here for Contra Costa HIV services](#) and [see our online directory for Alameda County HIV services](#).

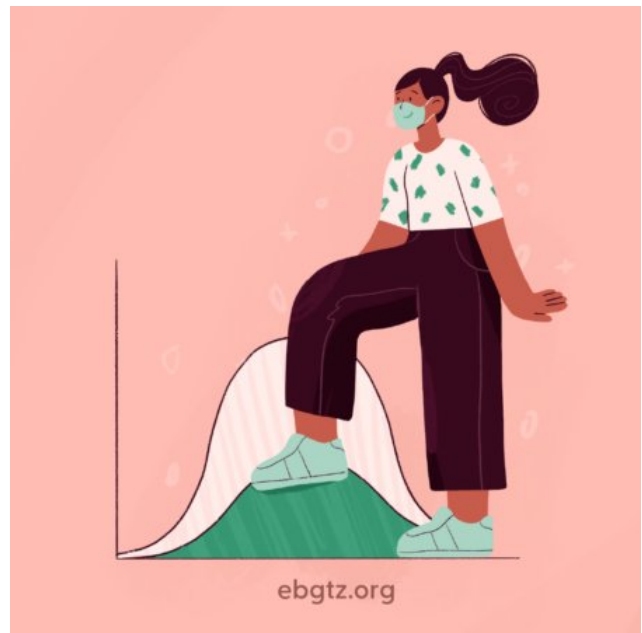
If your organization is in Alameda County and needs COVID-related supplies or staffing, please go to the [Emergency Medical Services website](#) to [request PPE](#), [request staffing](#) and [request testing supplies](#).

Please follow and share our [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts.

Starting October 7, the complete HIV+COVID-19 updates are now on a bi-weekly schedule of 1st and 3rd Wednesdays. COVID data updates will still be posted to this page on Wednesdays in the late afternoon during non-holiday weeks and new studies will be continuously added to our summary of [COVID-19 harm reduction strategies](#).

More detailed Alameda County COVID-19 weekly updates are accessible on the [county website](#) and will not longer be posted on this page. You can sign up to receive the Alameda County weekly COVID-19 newsletter by emailing Jamie.Yee@acgov.org.

[CLICK HERE FOR ALAMEDA COUNTY WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS](#)



OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP:

- [California Health Corps](#) – Use this link to register for the California Health Corps which is a State program for trained medical and healthcare workers to sign up and provide availability to assist in the COVID-19 response.
- [Medical Surge Volunteer Sign Up](#) – Use this link to register as a volunteer with the County of Alameda to assist with the COVID-19 response. Medically and non-medically trained volunteers will be needed. [Click here for more information.](#)

TOP LINKS:

- **HIV:** [FAQs for people living with HIV \(PLWH\)](#) and [Preguntas Frecuentes in Spanish](#), [Guidance for PLWH \(CDC\)](#), [Guidance for HIV providers](#)
- **HIV services during COVID-19:** [Click here for Contra Costa HIV services](#) and [see our online directory for Alameda County HIV services](#).
- **Key Communities:** [Harm Reduction Coalition](#), [Immigrants Rising](#), [Protecting Immigrant Families: Public Charge](#), [Healthcare for the Homeless](#)
- **COVID Testing, Food, Shelters:** [Alameda County COVID testing and services](#), [what to do if you test positive or have contact with someone with COVID](#), and [isolation housing](#), [Contra Costa County COVID testing](#)
- **COVID PPE, staffing or testing supplies:** [Alameda County EMS- request PPE](#), [request staffing](#) or [request testing supplies](#).
- **Public Health Department Updates:** [Alameda County](#), [Contra Costa County](#), [Solano County](#), [California State](#)
- **COVID Data:** [Alameda County](#), [Contra Costa County](#), [Solano County](#), [California State](#), [California \(SF Chronicle\)](#), [National/Global \(JHU\)](#), [By Race](#)

- **DIY Face Coverings and Masks:** [CDC \(easy no-sew\)](#), [Kaiser \(sewn\)](#), [Maker Mask \(sewn, science-based\)](#), [Olson Mask \(sewn\)](#)

ALAMEDA COUNTY GUIDANCE:

Download links for **Alameda County community or business** guidance on: [Face coverings](#), [social bubbles](#), [childcare and camps for all children](#), [graduations](#), [vehicular gatherings](#), [construction](#), [curbside retail pickups](#), [manufacturing and warehousing](#), [personal services](#), [youth extracurricular](#) and [general outdoor recreation activities](#).

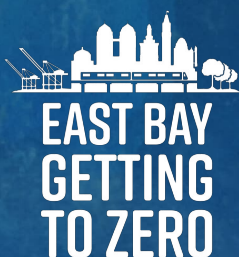
Download links for **Alameda County clinical guidance** on: [COVID-19 testing](#), [isolation orders in 7 languages](#) for all people getting tested, [reporting COVID-19 cases](#), [Project Roomkey isolation housing](#), [home health agencies](#), [remdesivir allocations](#), [routine vaccines](#), reporting pediatric [Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome](#), [resumption of non-urgent medical services](#), and [testing in Skilled Nursing Facilities](#).

If your organization is in Alameda County and needs COVID-related supplies or staffing, please go to the [Emergency Medical Services website](#) to [request PPE](#), [request staffing](#) and [request testing supplies](#).

LOOKING FOR COVID-19 TESTING?

- [Alameda County COVID testing sites: searchable map](#) (filter for COVID-19 testing) or [webpage](#). This list includes several community-based sites offering free testing for anyone with symptoms, including people without health insurance.
- [Contra Costa County free drive-through or walk-in COVID testing](#)
- [Solano County free testing sites](#)
- Please check the listing for updates and call the testing site before you leave your home/shelter/camp/car to make sure they are open for testing, you are eligible, and register if needed.
- If you don't have a provider and have COVID symptoms: In Alameda County, call Alameda Health System 510-437-8500 for a phone screen and guidance. In Contra Costa County, call 844-729-8410. In Solano County, the county COVID warmline is 707-784-8988.
- If you're having difficulty breathing and unstable, please go to your nearest emergency room.

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