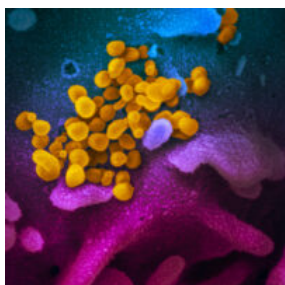


[Home](#) / [COVID-19](#) / [COVID updates](#) / [COVID-19 and HIV updates](#)

## COVID-19 AND HIV UPDATES

MARCH 17, 2021

[SIGN UP FOR OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER HERE](#)



The SARS-CoV-2 virus  
(NIAID)

Below are this week's East Bay COVID-19 and HIV updates. This page is usually updated on Wednesday evenings with data and resources gathered from many collaborators in [Alameda County](#), [Contra Costa County](#), [Solano County](#), CA state.

[VACCINES](#)[MASKS](#)[GUIDANCE](#)[RESOURCES & LINKS](#)[ARCHIVES](#)[PDF SUMMARY](#)

Click on these links for vaccines, masks, 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, video with some in-person visits available.

### Jump to:

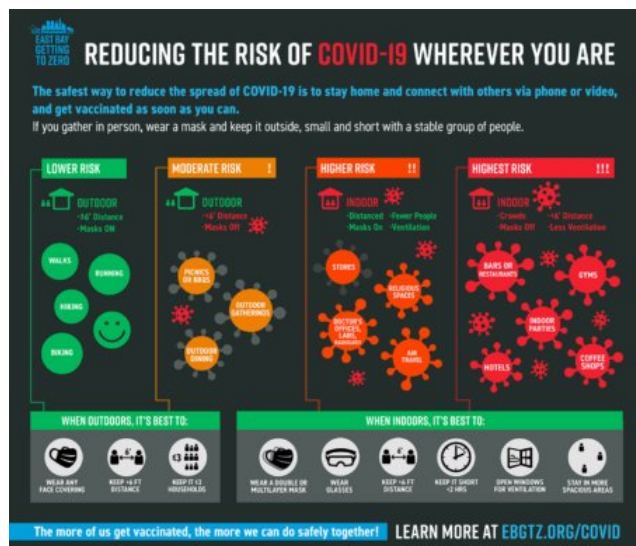
- [Key East Bay COVID-19 updates](#)
- [Community spotlight](#)
- [Vaccine eligibility and access; vaccines for people living with HIV](#)
- [Trends in cases and transmission rates](#)
- [Disparities: new data and studies](#)
- [Harm reduction: prevention for vaccinated people and maximizing mask protection](#)
- [HIV and global health updates](#)
- [Trainings, funding, job opportunities and other resources](#)
- [Top links, guidance and where to get tested](#)

**We are now one year into the global COVID-19 pandemic.** Exactly one year ago, on March 17, the Bay Area health officers implemented the [first shelter-in-place order](#). At the time, there were only 300 known cases of COVID-19 across the Bay Area. We now have over 400,000 known cases and 5,670 deaths in the Bay Area, and 537,123 deaths across the nation. Yet hope arrives this spring after a devastating winter surge, as three safe and effective vaccines are given to more people, and cases and deaths quickly decline.

**President Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief bill** into law on Thursday, March 11. The bill, also known as the American Rescue Plan, provides \$1,400 direct stimulus payments, extends unemployment benefits, invests in equitable vaccine distribution, and much more. This bill also provides urgently-needed state and local funding for our community in the East Bay. More funding details are below.

On March 15, California expanded vaccine eligibility to include people with **high-risk health conditions**, people in congregate residential settings such as jails and shelters, and public transit workers. Solano County has opened vaccinations to people 50 and older. This adds to existing eligibility for all people ages 65 and over, workers in health care, education/child care, emergency services, and food/agriculture. [More details are below](#). President Biden has also directed states to make vaccine available to all adults by May 1.

We updated our COVID-19 harm reduction infographic in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)!



The graphics were updated to include guidance around double-masking (or multi-layered masking), air travel, lab and radiology settings. [Please download them here in English](#) and [here in Spanish](#). [Click here for the printable PDF in English](#) and [click here for the printable PDF in Spanish](#).

The SF Community Clinic Consortium developed this [HIV clinic reopening guidance document](#) which clinic teams might find helpful around specific considerations for PLWH.

**You are invited to join us on Thursday, April 29, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm to strengthen HIV service collaborations.** This East Bay linkage and retention network workshop will focus on strengthening our online resources and contacts to streamline warm hand-offs, rapid linkages to services. [Please click here](#) for more info and to register.

## EAST BAY COVID-19 UPDATES

COVID-19 daily case and hospitalization rates in the East Bay have fallen since mid-January. Death rates have declined since the end of January. As the Bay Area starts to loosen restrictions, we are at a critical and yet hopeful point in the pandemic. We can prevent another surge if we keep up masking, distancing and getting people vaccinated.

**Thank you to everyone in our network doing the crucial work over the past year of supporting community members to stay safe and get vaccinated!**

Alameda, Contra Costa and Solano Counties have moved to the **red tier of California's reopening framework**. Estimated transmission rates in the Bay Area have been below 1 since January and are 0.71 to 0.73 this week, so cases continue to decrease.

Alameda County's [vaccination dashboard](#) shows that 31.5% of residents ages 16 and over have received at least one vaccine dose as of March 17. Data from long-term care facilities (nursing homes, etc.) show a 95% decline in deaths this year compared to 2020.

A new UCSF study reported on March 17 has found that the **B.1.427/9 (CA) variants are about 20% more infectious** than the original virus and are likely now 75-90% of cases in California. Previous studies linked the B.1.427/9 variants to higher

rates of ICU and ventilation use. The US DHHS halted shipments of bamlanivimad, a monoclonal antibody treatment for COVID-19, citing concerns that it may be less effective against these variants. Health care providers are asked to report any breakthrough infections for people who are vaccinated to the county public health departments.

Please continue to **wear masks, keep distance and help everyone get vaccinated as soon as it's our turn**, especially with **more infectious variants** identified in the Bay Area, including the **B1427/9 CA**, **B117 UK** and **B1351 South African** variants. Please see below for more prevention tips.



**The Conversation: Between Us, About Us.** Several East Bay Black health care leaders, including Dr. Noha Aboelata, Dr. Damon Francis and Dr. Pamela Mackey are featured [in this video](#) hosted by W. Kamau Bell talking about COVID vaccines.

On March 8, the US **CDC released new guidance for what fully vaccinated people can do**, such as gathering with other vaccinated people in small groups and visiting one low-risk household indoors without masks, while still masking and distancing in public spaces. Click for: [general guidance](#), [additional details](#), [the scientific brief](#). Please see the infographic from *SF Chronicle* outlining the new CDC guidance.

For example, this means grandparents who received all their vaccine doses at least 2 weeks ago may visit unvaccinated children and grandchildren in one other household without masks and distancing, provided they are not at increased risk for severe illness.



**The best vaccine is the one that you can get the soonest.** We now have three authorized vaccines available in the East Bay: the **Pfizer** and **Moderna** mRNA vaccines and now the **Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) one-dose vaccine**. [Here's an infographic](#) from JAMA on how the J&J vaccine works. All three authorized vaccines are highly protective, especially against severe disease, and 100% effective in clinical trials against hospitalization and death. Don't throw away your shot!

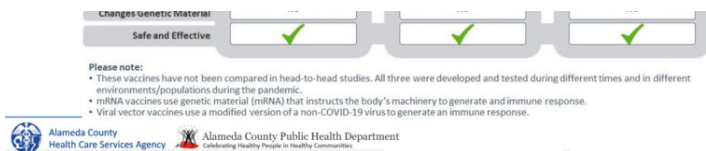
### COVID-19 vaccines currently available

	Pfizer	Moderna	Janssen (J&J)
COVID-19 Vaccine Type	mRNA	mRNA	viral vector
Number of Doses Needed	2	2	1
Potential Side Effects	Injection site pain, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, fever	Injection site pain, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, joint pain, chills, fever	Fatigue, headache, muscle pain
Protection against Serious Infection	95% after 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose	94% after 2 <sup>nd</sup> dose	77% after 14 days 85% after 28 days
Protection against Death	100%	100%	100%
Causes COVID-19 or	No	No	No

Here is an infographic from Alameda County showing the 3 available vaccines. Clinical trials show that while they were not compared in trials head-to-head, they are all safe and highly effective.

**Please see below for lots of exciting updates in East Bay vaccine eligibility!**





**Real-world vaccine data shows high efficacy and safety:** A real-world study of 1.2 million people in Israel confirms high efficacy for mRNA vaccines 92% overall for any infection, 94% for symptomatic infection, and suggests a 90% reduction in

asymptomatic infection for people vaccinated with the Pfizer mRNA vaccine.

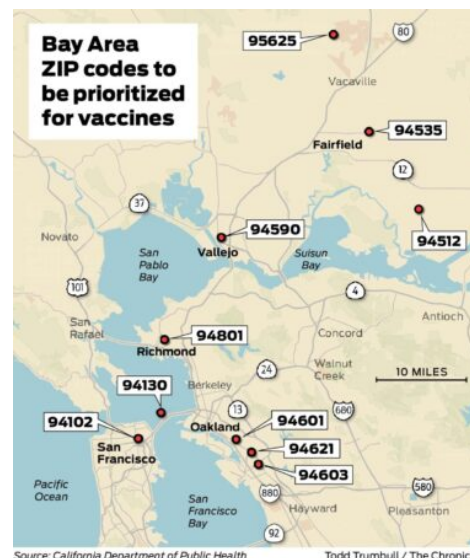
**New large population vaccine safety data from the CDC** on February 19 found that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were safe and side effects were rare. Nearly 14 million vaccinations were tracked and found that of the adverse events reported (injection site pain, headaches, fatigue, muscle aches), 91% of those cases were not serious.

**Moderna has started studying its vaccine in children** ages 6 months to 12 years old. Pfizer is studying its vaccine in kids 12 to 15 years old, and is authorized for use in people as young as 16. Currently Moderna and the Johnson & Johnson vaccines are authorized for people ages 18 and over.

**California announced a new vaccine equity distribution plan** on March 4 that will allocate 40% of the vaccine supply to the 447 lowest-income zip codes in the state. As of March 4, about 17% of total vaccines have been given to people in these lowest income zip codes, compared to 34% that have gone to the highest-income areas. In the Bay Area, there are only 10 zip codes included, and in the East Bay, it includes 3 in Oakland, one each in Richmond, Vallejo, Fairfield and the 108-person town of Birds Landing in Solano County. Please see the infographic from *SF Chronicle* showing the included zip codes. It's not clear yet how this plan will be implemented.

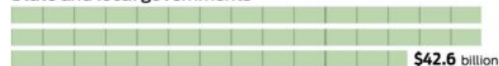
Alameda Health Consortium has [posted](#) new downloadable flyers on **COVID Vaccine Myths and Facts and FAQs** in English, Español, 中文, and Arabic. [Click here](#) to download.

On March 10, the **CDC and CMS released new guidance for nursing home visitations**, allowing for indoor visits at all times and for all residents following infection control protocols.



## Coronavirus aid for California

State and local governments



K-12 schools



Colleges and universities



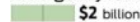
Public transit



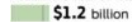
Child care



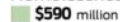
Emergency rental assistance



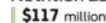
Homeowner assistance



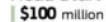
Homelessness aid



Nutrition assistance



Head Start



The House is expected to give final congressional approval Wednesday to a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus stimulus bill. Billions of dollars will go to governments, schools and others in California.

Sources: Congressional Research Service, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Sen. Alex Padilla's office, Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

John Blanchard / The Chronicle

The US **\$1.9 trillion relief bill, the American Rescue Plan, was signed into law** on March 11 by President Biden. The bill includes \$1,400 direct payments, \$300 per week unemployment payments, increases to the child tax credit and reductions in ACA and COBRA health plan costs for people who meet income eligibility requirements.

This bill also provides urgently-needed state and local funding for our community in the East Bay. Funding for California is described in the infographic posted here from *SF Chronicle*, and the amounts coming to some East Bay counties and cities are listed below:

- Alameda County – \$324 million
- City of Alameda – \$29 million
- Oakland – \$192 million
- Berkeley – \$68 million
- Emeryville – \$2.27 million
- San Leandro – \$19.1 million

**Providers are encouraged to talk with patients and clients about vaccinations** to combat misinformation and address

concerns. Communities of color continue to turn to their trusted health providers for counsel, and [providers are changing minds about vaccinations](#). The ICD-10 code [Z71.89](#) may be used for vaccine counseling. Dr. Sunny Lai from Highland's HIV clinic compiled [Guidance for talking with patients about vaccines and FAQs for PLWH](#) ([click to download the PDF](#)).

**People needing medical care for any condition are still encouraged to seek care** as our clinics and hospitals remain open with strict safety protocols to take care of all people.

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## COMMUNITY VACCINE SPOTLIGHTS



**Christian Aguirre (He/Him), HIV Prevention Manager at Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa County** says, "I felt very fortunate to have the chance to receive the vaccine and help protect the LGBTQI+ community members that are served through Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa. Many of us struggle when it comes to receiving health services because of privilege, cost, insurance, and immigration status. The advice I had to give to myself was: If you are available to get the vaccine, do it ASAP!"

**Terri Lynn Haggins, Community member & WORLD volunteer** says, "I took my second vaccine today. It's important to think first about your health! NO to HIV...NO to cancer and NO to Covid-19!"



## VACCINE ELIGIBILITY AND ACCESS

**As of March 17, Alameda and Contra Costa and Solano Counties have opened eligibility for people with high-risk health conditions, people in congregate residential settings such as jails and shelters, and public transit workers.** This adds to existing eligibility for all people ages 65 and over as well as workers in health care, education/child care, emergency services, and food/agriculture. CA vaccine priority groups are [defined here](#).

**Contra Costa County, San Francisco City/County and Kaiser Permanente have added HIV** to their list of qualifying health conditions. Alameda County has not added HIV as one of the qualifying health conditions. However, **health care providers can use clinical judgment and refer people whom they consider at high risk for serious COVID-19 for vaccination.** In Alameda County, people can indicate in their registration that they have an underlying condition without needing to divulge or show additional evidence of their diagnosis or specific qualifying condition.

**In Alameda and Solano Counties, people experiencing homelessness** (using the HRSA definition which includes people who are doubled-up in a room, such as couch surfing) are now all eligible to receive vaccines. People in Alameda County can self-attest to their houseless status and underlying medical conditions.

**Solano County has also opened vaccine eligibility for all people 50 and over**, as well as industrial and manufacturing workers. People who are eligible and live or work in Solano County can [click here to register](#) for appointments at the public mass vaccination events at the Solano County Fairgrounds.

**East Bay Paratransit** is now offering transportation to and from vaccination sites and a briefer, streamlined eligibility process to apply for services. [Click here](#) or call 510-287-5000 for more information.

**To access vaccines, we recommend the following steps:**

1. **Sign up for all the notification systems** available to you: see links below.
2. **Check on your vaccine eligibility** with your medical provider and/or county for when the vaccine

is available for your age or occupation group. See links below.

**1. When you are eligible, keep checking for available appointments:**

- Check your email for notifications and a link for appointments.
- Check online or call your medical provider for appointment availability.
- If you cannot get a vaccine through your health provider, check if you can get a vaccine through a public (county) vaccination site.
- Please see below for links to medical providers and public vaccine sites.
  - [VaccinateCA](#) is a volunteer-run website which may list additional vaccine sites in CA.
  - [Oaklandside](#) has additional details for Alameda County on their website.
- Don't give up! Keep checking and trying; eventually there will be enough vaccine.

**All COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost. No one should be charged for the vaccine.**

**Notifications for when vaccine is available for you:**

There is no unified notification system, so you may choose to sign up for many different notification systems to stay informed about the full breadth of vaccination opportunities available to you:

- **California State** MyTurn notifications (in English, Español, 中文, Tagalog, Arabic, 한국어, Tiếng Việt)
- **Alameda County** notifications (in English, Español, 中文; [click here](#) for how-to video)
- **City of Berkeley** notifications
- **Solano County** notifications
- **Dr. B** standby notification list for leftover vaccines
- You can also find out if your medical provider has a notification system.

**Vaccines through medical providers:**

- **Kaiser members**
- **Sutter members**
- **Stanford Health members**
- Many **community health centers** are providing vaccine appointments to eligible members. Please contact your provider to find out more. [Asian Health Services members: click here.](#)  
[Alameda Health Systems members: click here.](#)

**Vaccines for the public at mass vaccination sites:**

- **Oakland Coliseum:** [Click here for the MyTurn webpage](#) to check eligibility and appointment availability. New toll-free phone line: 833-422-4255.
  - This site is run by FEMA and CA state emergency services and receives its own vaccine supply.
  - Both drive-through and walk-up appointments are available.
  - Appointment slots are added as supplies come in, starting in the early morning, so keep checking for availability if you first don't succeed.
- **Alameda Fairgrounds: is open for Alameda County residents.** [Click here](#) for appointment info.
- **The Berkeley Golden Gate Fields Buchanan parking lot site** is open for people living in northern Alameda County. More info from [Berkeleyside](#) can be found [here](#).
- **Solano County Fairgrounds:** for eligible people living or working in Solano County.

**Vaccines through pharmacies:**

- **CVS pharmacies**
- **Rite Aid pharmacies**

## Vaccines for the public through county vaccination sites:

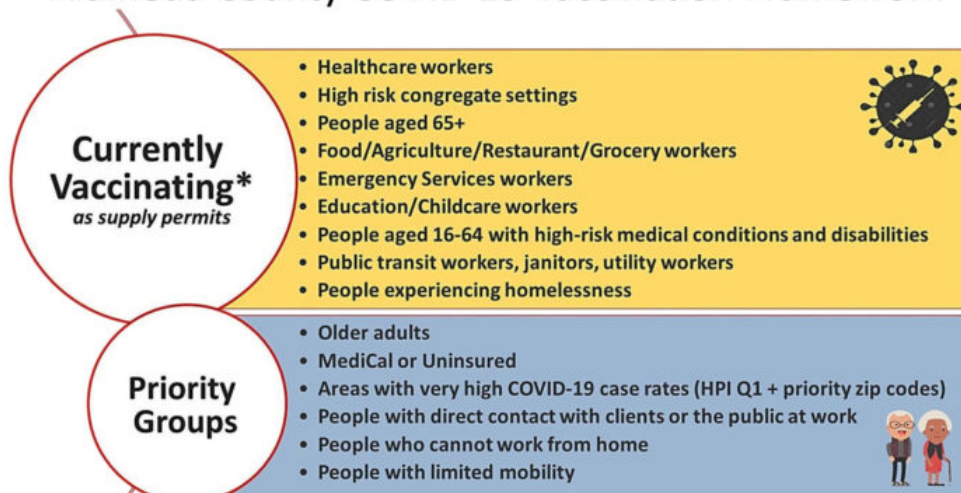
- **Alameda County** COVID-19 vaccine eligibility and notifications in English, Spanish/Español, Chinese/中文
  - [Click here for how-to video.](#)
  - The county is prioritizing people in these neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted by the virus: 94601 and 94606 (San Antonio/Fruitvale), 94603 and 94621 (East Oakland), 94607 (West Oakland), 94578, 94541, and 94580 (Ashland/Cherryland) and 94544 (South Hayward).
  - Notifications will be sent out when vaccines are available for your group from county-supplied sites.
  - [Kaiser](#), [Sutter](#), [Stanford](#) and the [Coliseum](#) get their own supply, so check with them separately.
  - Health care workers need to sign up as “health care providers” to get notifications.
  - City of Berkeley vaccine notifications: [click here to register](#)
- **Contra Costa County** COVID-19 vaccine eligibility updates and appointments
  - For appointment info: [click here](#) and go to “making an appointment.”
  - For county vaccine sites, [click here to request an appointment](#) or call 1-833-829-2626.
  - To bring equity-related concerns to Contra Costa County’s attention, [click here](#).
- **Solano County** vaccine eligibility updates, notifications and access points
  - Please [click here](#) and scroll to the bottom for where to access vaccines.
  - [Click here for vaccine appointments at the Solano County Fairgrounds.](#)

**Vaccine appointments may still be difficult to access** due to limited and uneven vaccine supplies, a fragmented health care system, and a confusing eligibility system. **When you’re eligible, keep checking and trying, and you will eventually get a vaccine appointment.**

## Who is eligible for vaccines now?

Bay Area counties are following **CA state guidelines on vaccine prioritization**. **Alameda County** additionally uses the following criteria to determine whom to invite to make appointments at county vaccination sites through their notification system:

## Alameda County COVID-19 Vaccination Framework



\* Alameda County is aligned with state guidance; for details please see: [COVID-19 vaccination page](#) & [Essential Workforce definitions](#) & [Provider Bulletin, 3/11/21](#) & [High-risk conditions factsheet](#)



## State Update: Expanded Eligibility for Vaccine as of 3/15/21

### People with underlying medical conditions:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease (stage 4 and above)
- Chronic pulmonary disease (oxygen dependent)
- Down syndrome
- Immunocompromised state from solid organ transplant
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Heart conditions (excludes hypertension)
- Severe obesity (Body Mass Index  $\geq 40\text{kg/m}^2$ )
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus (with hemoglobin A1c level greater than 7.5%)

OR

If as a result of a developmental or other severe high-risk disability one or more of the following applies:

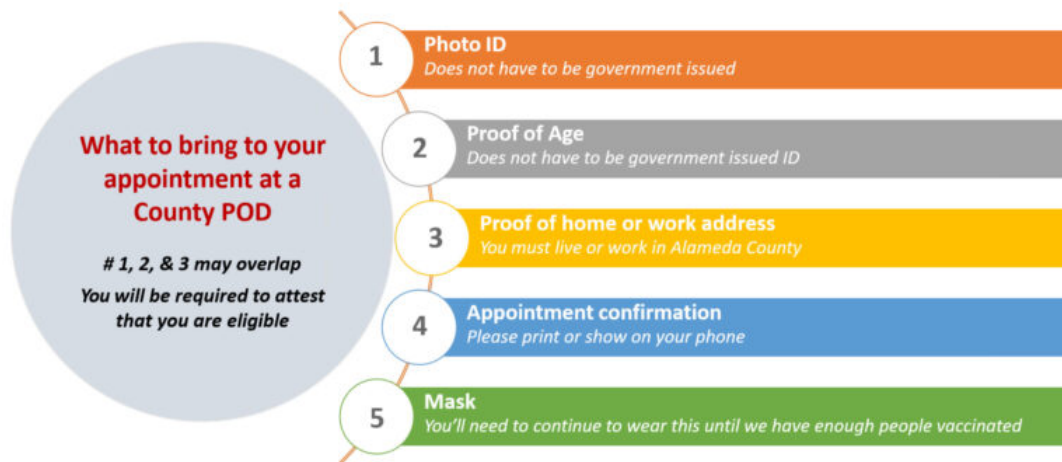
- Individual is likely to develop severe life-threatening illness or death from COVID-19 infection
- Acquiring COVID-19 will limit the individual's ability to receive ongoing care or services vital to their well-being and survival
- Providing adequate and timely COVID care will be particularly challenging due to individual's disability



Alameda County  
Health Care Services Agency



Alameda County Public Health Department  
Celebrating Healthy People in Healthy Communities



Alameda County  
Health Care Services Agency



Alameda County Public Health Department  
Celebrating Healthy People in Healthy Communities

## PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND COVID-19 VACCINES

Currently all people living with HIV (PLWH) are recommended to get the COVID-19 vaccine once eligible. Contra Costa County, San Francisco City/County and Kaiser Permanente have added HIV to their list of qualifying health conditions. Alameda County has not added HIV as one of the qualifying health conditions but providers can still refer PLWH for vaccines if considered at high risk. PLWH can self-attest online and at registration without needing to divulge their diagnosis at vaccination sites.

The approved vaccines are not live vaccines and are considered safe for people living with HIV regardless of CD4 count. A diagnosis of HIV alone, regardless of immune status, is not one of the qualifying medical conditions for vaccines under the California's vaccine guidelines [listed here](#). There is [emerging data](#) that people living with HIV and CD4 counts less than 200 are at greater risk for hospitalizations and death, so consider prioritizing outreach, education and vaccinations for this potentially more-at-risk group.

The Moderna vaccine trial included 179 PLWH and the Pfizer trial included 196 PLWH but data on these sub-groups has not



been reported separately yet. There is currently no recommendation to check antibody levels for people living with HIV after completing vaccination. We are not sure yet how much commercially available SARS-CoV2 antibody tests such as at Quest and LabCorp check for protective levels of neutralizing spike antibodies generated by the vaccines, but providers and patients may discuss checking for spike IgG antibody levels two or more weeks after the second vaccine dose while we await more data.

Resources for PLWH and COVID-19 vaccines: [UNAIDS infosheet on COVID-19 vaccines and HIV](#), [Clinical FAQs with Dr. Paul Sax at Harvard](#) and [The New England Journal of Medicine](#), [Clinical FAQs for people living with HIV from HIVMA \(PDF\)](#), [Guidance for talking with patients and FAQs for PLWH from Alameda Health Systems \(PDF\)](#).

## HELP THE VACCINE ROLL-OUT EFFORT!

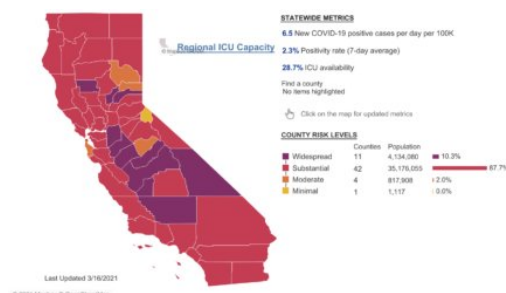
- **Health care clinics and organizations** are encouraged to [enroll in CalVax](#) to become vaccinators.
- **To volunteer** at a county vaccination site, [please register here](#).
- **To volunteer** at a state MyTurn vaccination site, [please register here](#).

### MORE VACCINE RESOURCES

## TRENDS IN CASES AND TRANSMISSION RATES

**Transmission rates (Re)** continue to be less than 1, which means cases are decreasing. As of March 15, the transmission rates were 0.73 in Alameda County, 0.71 in Contra Costa and 0.71 in Solano County, and 0.75 statewide. Our goal is to support the vaccine roll-out, masking, distancing, staying outdoors and avoiding gatherings to keep transmission rates less than 1.

On March 12, California state **revised the Blueprint tier system** to increase the thresholds for the red and purple tiers according to statewide vaccination rates in the lowest [Healthy Place Index](#) quartile.



### ALAMEDA COUNTY DATA AS OF MARCH 17:

- Red "substantial" tier week 2.
- 5.6 new cases of COVID-19 per day per 100,000 residents (down from 7.1 last week).
- 1.5% test positivity rate countywide (down from 1.8%).
- 2.4% test positivity in the lowest quartile [Healthy Places Index](#) (HPI) census tract (down from 2.6%).
- 0.73 transmission rate on the Cal-CAT model (up from 0.69).
- 31.5% vaccination rate (first dose) residents ages 16+ (up from 27%), and 15.6% fully vaccinated.

### CONTRA COSTA COUNTY DATA AS OF MARCH 17:

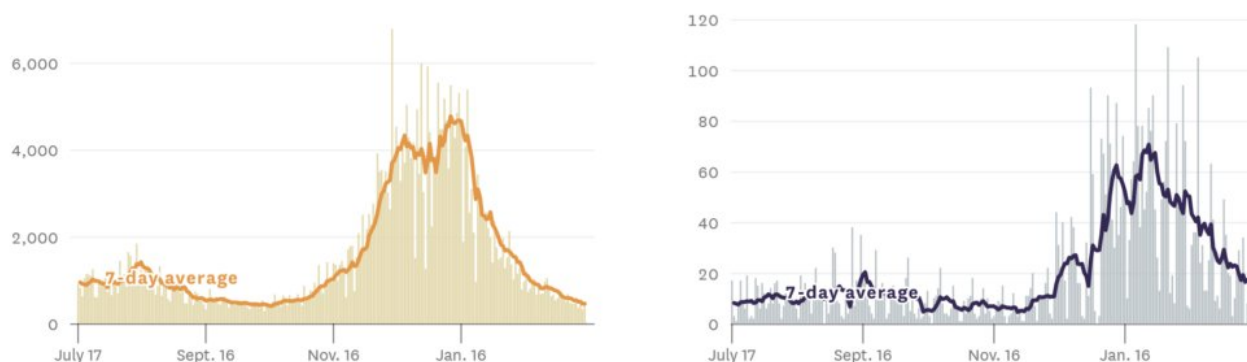
- Red "substantial" tier week 1.
- 7.7 new cases of COVID-19 per day per 100,000 residents (down from 9.2).
- 2.2% positivity rate (down from 2.9%).
- 3.9% test positivity in the lowest quartile HPI tract (down from 4.9%).
- 0.71 transmission rate (down from 0.79).

### SOLANO COUNTY DATA AS OF MARCH 17:

- Red "substantial" tier week 2.
- 7.0 new cases of COVID-19 per day per 100,000 residents (same as last week).
- 2.5% positivity rate (up from 2.4%).

- 3.1% test positivity in the lowest quartile HPI tract (down from 3.6%).
- 0.71 transmission rate (down from 0.75).

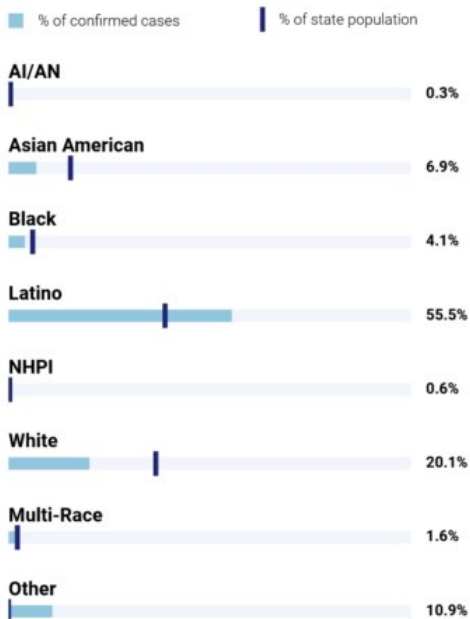
### New reported cases and deaths in the Bay Area, by day



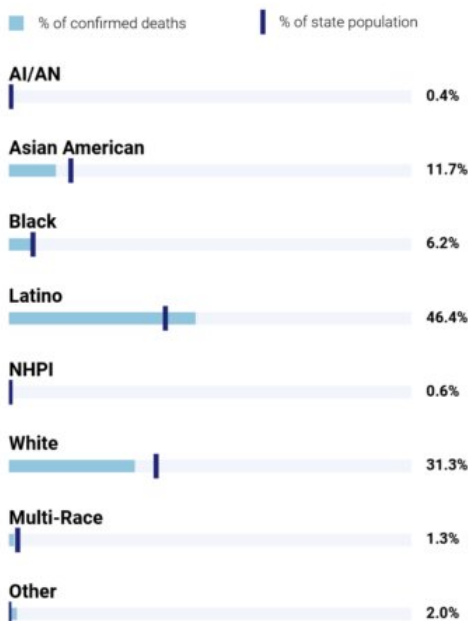
SF Chronicle, 3/17/21: COVID-19 daily cases and deaths in the Bay Area.

## DISPARITIES: NEW DATA AND STUDIES

Confirmed cases by race and ethnicity in California



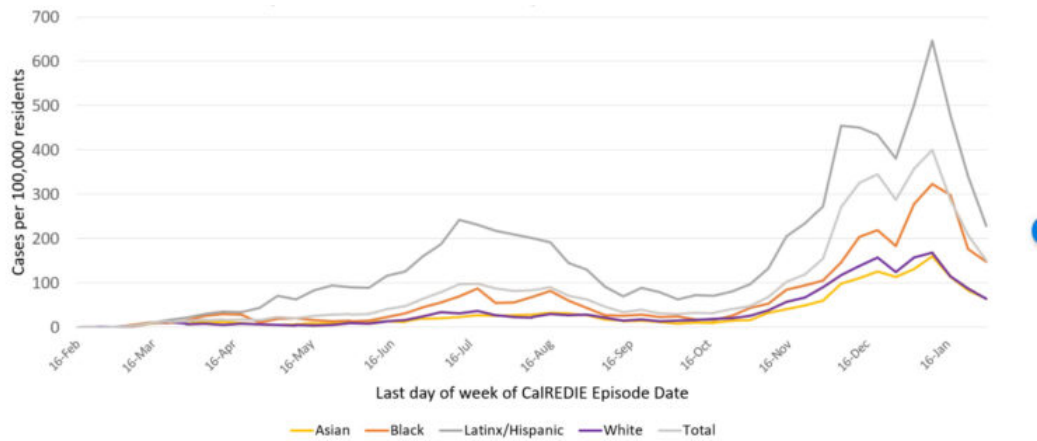
Confirmed deaths by race and ethnicity in California



Updated March 17, 2021 with data from March 16, 2021. Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

CDPH CA State COVID-19 dashboard 3/17/21: Latinx and Black/African American Californians continue to be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

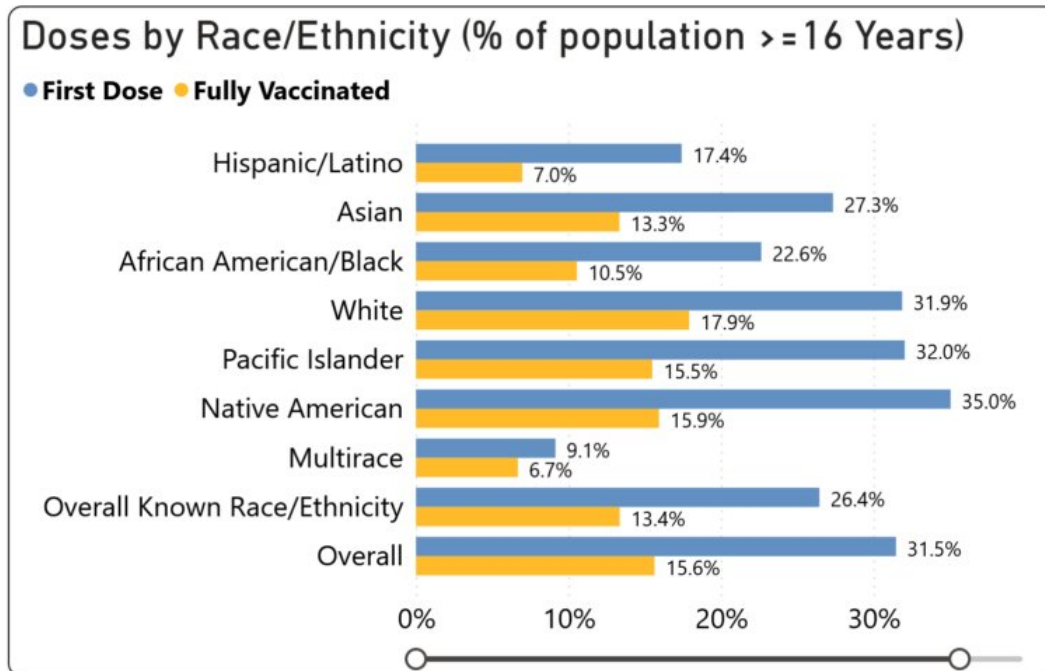
### Alameda County COVID-19 weekly case rate



Cases source: CalREDIE Data Distribution Portal download February 11, 2021 8:00 am. Includes City of Berkeley



In [Alameda County](#), while case rates continue to fall from their January peak among all race/ethnicity groups, Latinx people are still more than 4 times more likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19 than white people. Black/African American residents are nearly 2 times more likely to die from COVID-19 compared to their white neighbors.



[Alameda County vaccination rates by race/ethnicity as of March 17](#) show that Latinx, Black/African American and Asian residents are less likely to have been vaccinated compared to White residents. Full vaccination rates in higher income areas such as Piedmont are more than twice as high (29%) than the hardest-hit cities of Oakland (15%) and Hayward (14%).

[Anti-Asian violence has risen](#) across the US during the pandemic, including a shooting in the Atlanta area on March 16 that killed 8 people at massage parlors, mostly Asian women, and is under investigation for racial motivation.

## HARM REDUCTION TIPS AND RESOURCES

On March 8, the US [CDC released new guidance for what fully vaccinated people can do](#), such as gathering with other vaccinated people in small groups and visiting one low-risk household indoors without masks, while still masking and distancing in public spaces. Click for: [general guidance](#), [additional details](#), [the scientific brief](#).

See the [key updates section above](#) for the infographic from [SF Chronicle](#) outlining the new CDC guidance.

**Promising real-world vaccination data** is showing signs that vaccinated people have lower likelihood of transmitting the virus to others. The early data shows that vaccinated people are less likely to get asymptomatic infection (90%) and lower viral loads when infected (4x decreases). In turn, lower viral loads and asymptomatic infection are linked to less viral spread.

A new review in The Lancet describes **the evidence linking the dose of viral particles a person is exposed to ("inoculum") to COVID-19 disease severity**. The authors argue that, "even as safe and effective vaccines are being rolled out, non-pharmaceutical interventions will continue to play an essential and ongoing role in suppressing the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and any further mutations." This includes wearing masks, distancing, hand hygiene and staying in well-ventilated area when in public.

**Mask mandates slow transmissions while on-site dining speed up transmissions:** A new CDC study shows that US counties that have mandated masks had decreases in case and death rates within 20 days of implementation. Whereas allowing on-site dining was associated with case and death rates 41 and 61-100 days after implementation. The study did not differentiate between indoor or outdoor dining.

A new study shows that **COVID-19 infection incidence in 1,594 New York City public schools** showed remarkably low transmission rates. From October to December 2020 was lower for people in public schools compared to the general community, with a 0.4% overall positivity rate. Contact tracing showed that among school-based close contacts, 78% index cases were adults.



## MAXIMIZING MASK PROTECTION

With evidence of more infectious variants circulating in the East Bay, we may be wondering if we should increase our prevention efforts.

Wearing two masks on top of each other (double-masking) and 3+ layered masks can provide more protection so long as you can keep them tight on your face. A new mask study by the CDC demonstrates that tight-fitting multilayered masks and double-masking can decrease exposure to aerosols by up to 95%.

Before you go out, please make sure your mask set up is comfortable and breathable enough to keep on your face! No matter how many layers a mask has, it will not be useful if you can't keep it covering your nose and mouth.

**Here are the qualities that make masks more protective**, which we recommend using in indoor public settings (see higher/highest risk settings in our infographic below):

- **Use tightly-woven fabric or non-woven material**, like in surgical masks.
- **Use multiple layers:**
  - 2 layers provide decent protection and 3 or more layers provide maximal protection.
  - A non-woven layer, such as a disposable surgical-type mask or filter layer can help repel droplets.
  - You can double-mask by using a fitted cloth mask with a disposable surgical-type mask, like





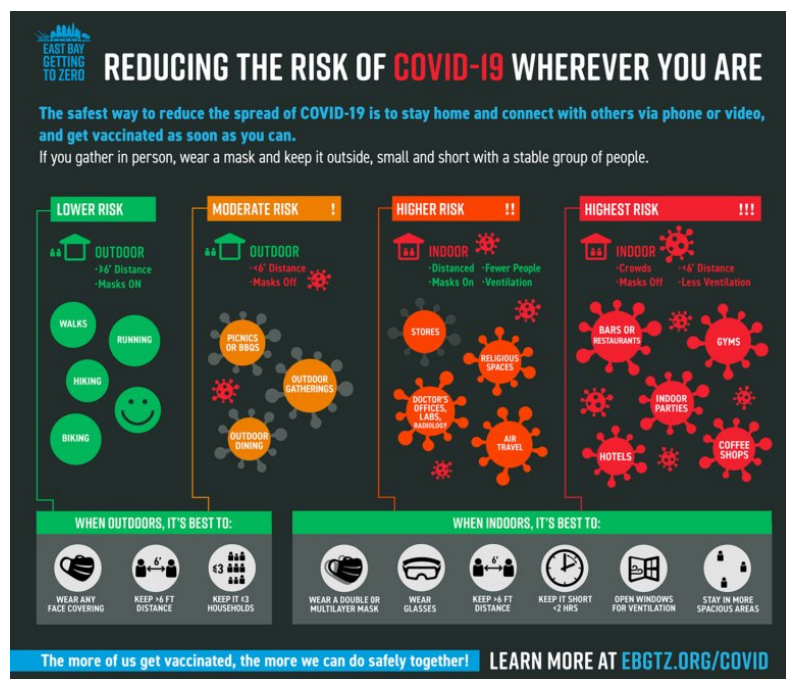
in the diagram.

- Consider adding a face shield and/or goggles in the highest risk settings.
- **Make it fit tight:**
  - Use tight/snug cloth masks.
  - Reduce top gaps by using masks with adjustable nose wires.
  - Reduce gaps in ear loop masks by tying knots near the sides. ([video here](#))
  - Make sure the mask has a tight seal all around, over your nose, sides of your mouth and under your chin.
  - In high risk work settings, get fit-tested for an N95 mask (the gold standard in protective masks).
  - Keep in mind that KN95 masks are not fit-tested and are [less protective](#) than N95 masks. Treat them like surgical masks.



**Figure 1. Recommended Masks for Public**  
Top: basic; bottom: maximal protection.

**References:** Diagrams from *Maximizing Fit for Cloth and Medical Procedure Masks to Improve Performance and Reduce SARS-CoV-2 Transmission and Exposure, 2021* by the CDC COVID-19 Emergency Response Team and *...Importance of Face Masks for COVID-19* by Monica Gandhi and Linsey C. Marr. Scientific references for these masking tips are located [here](#).



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

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

Updated 12.23.20 \* Data compiled by Sophy S. Wong, MD  
Icons by Good Ware, Freepik and Srip on Flaticon.com  
Please see [EBGTZ.org/resources](#) for the complete list of sources for this table.

Our **summary of COVID prevention research** is constantly updated with new studies.

Our updated COVID-19 prevention and harm reduction infographic is available in **English** and **Spanish**! Please download them here in English and here in Spanish and share with your clients, coworkers, friends and family! To download printable PDF versions, [click here](#) for the PDF in English and [click here](#) for the PDF in Spanish.

**References:** Bay Area public health guidance on gatherings; summary of evidence and scientific studies

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

**To slow the spread of COVID-19, we all need to stay home when we can and when we go out:**

- [Wear masks](#) and glasses,
- Stay outdoors whenever possible,
- Avoid crowds and maintain at least six feet distance from others,
- Sanitize or wash hands frequently, and
- Stay home when sick.

## HIV AND GLOBAL HEALTH UPDATES

In HIV-related news, a new study on same-day PrEP for people at risk for HIV in Uganda and Kenya led by a UCSF-Ugandan/Kenyan collaboration showed that same-day PrEP lowered HIV incidence by 74%. These findings support our efforts in the [East Bay for same-day PrEP access](#).

March 3rd is **International Sex Worker Rights Day** and California HIV/AIDS Policy Research Center (CHRP) released a [health brief](#) examining the criminalization of commercial sex trade and frameworks seeking to regulate it across the globe and reposted a [health brief](#) documenting barriers and facilitators to culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive health services for women of color in California.

**Ebola outbreaks in the DRC and Guinea:** The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued a [health alert](#) on March 6 regarding the monitoring of travelers returning to California from the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Nzérékoré Region of Guinea following Ebola outbreaks in those countries, with nearly 30 combined cases and four deaths. Currently there are no cases known in the US. Health care providers are asked to ask patients about travel history, utilize infection control measures and monitor for symptoms such as fever, headache, abdominal pain, muscle aches, etc. And to report suspected Ebola cases to your local health department (in Alameda County: 510-267-3250).



## OTHER UPDATES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

### Jobs, Internships, Scholarships and more:

- [Rafiki Coalition for Health and Wellness](#) is seeking applicants for three positions who have a shared lived experience and cultural context with clientele: [Cancer Navigator](#), [Mental Health Therapist Consultant](#) and [Mental Health Therapist](#).
- Bay Area North & Central Coast AETC is looking for a Director. Learn more about this position [here](#).
- [Gender Health SF](#) has one full-time or two part-time job openings for a patient access navigator, contracted employment opportunity through the San Francisco Study Center. Interested candidates should send their cover letter and resume to [genderhealthsf@sfdph.org](mailto:genderhealthsf@sfdph.org).
- Alameda County Department of Public Health is looking for a Public Health Investigator. Learn more about the opportunity [here](#)
- [ChangeLab Solutions](#) recently launched the Housing Solutions Collaborative – a learning collective for cross-sector teams that offers peer support, technical assistance, and a stipend to help teams from 8 small to mid-sized cities advance equitable legal and policy solutions to the growing housing crisis. See email below for more information. Learn more about the opportunity and [apply here](#).
- *\*Youth opportunity!\** The City of Oakland is currently recruiting to fill part-time Recreation Aide positions in Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development Centers for the summer. Working hours will vary from week to week. Recreation Aides will provide support to Recreation Leaders in conducting programs and activities, assist with supervision of youth, help mediate conflict resolution when needed, and display role model behavior to youth. Learn more about these positions [here](#).
- *\*Youth opportunity!\** The Directing Change Program is accepting art submissions for March's Hope & Justice contest, "Hope for Change." This is part of their monthly contest that asks students to create art in any form (visual art, film,

narrative, music) that expresses how they are coping and shares their thoughts on issues that affect them. They are looking for young people to create art pieces exploring mental health, hope, resilience, and change. Learn more about this opportunity [here](#).

#### Funding opportunities:

- Positive Action Community Grants (PACG) from ViiV Healthcare can support organizations applying for General Operating Support, Special Events Sponsorships, or Project Support. Learn more about this funding opportunity and [apply here](#).

#### Web events:

- Join COVID-19 Black's 2nd town hall on Thursday, March 25th from 5:30-7pm. Hear from Policy makers, Public Health Officials, Doctors & Advocates from all Bay Area Counties. Learn and discuss the facts about the vaccine. Protect yourself and your loved ones. Register [here](#).
- In commemoration of National Native HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, the Region 9 Prevention through Active Community Engagement Program (PACE) in collaboration with UCLA is holding a panel discussion among Native-serving organizations and leaders for an opportunity to highlight how to eliminate HIV disparities and inequities among Native communities. The panel is titled Zero is Possible Together: Innovation + Awareness and will take place on Tuesday, March 23, 2021, 11-12:30pm. Register for the event [here](#).
- Alameda County Care Connect is hosting a webinar on 'Self-Care and Stress Reduction for Emotional Wellness on Tuesday, March 30, 2021 from 10-12pm. Participants will learn practical self-management tools to apply in their own lives as well as with assisting clients with their own emotional wellness. Learn more and register [here](#).
- National Harm Reduction Coalition's [DOPE Project](#) hosts monthly online & open overdose prevention and naloxone trainings. Join the upcoming training on March 31st from 9-10:30am. Register [here](#).

#### Other resources:

- California's Emergency Rental Assistance Program seeks to distribute money to landlords and tenants financially impacted by COVID-19. The funds are available on a first-come-first-serve basis and applications will be processed until the funds run out. The application is open and can be found at [Housingiskey.com](#)
- California Department of Public Health's Office of AIDS has shared their March OAVoice newsletter. Please access it [here](#).

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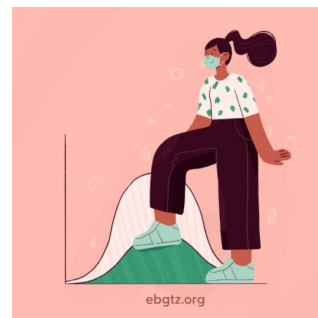
**HIV services during COVID-19:** [Click here for Contra Costa HIV services](#) and [see our online directory for Alameda County HIV services](#).

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 and testing supplies and [request staffing](#).

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

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**A note about this webpage:** COVID and HIV practice-changing updates will be posted on this page, usually weekly on Wednesday evenings and will be less frequent as the pandemic stabilizes. New studies will be continuously added to our summary of [COVID-19 harm reduction strategies](#). The emailed [HIV+COVID-19 update newsletters](#) are now on a monthly schedule of third Wednesdays.



**Official 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](mailto:Jamie.Yee@acgov.org).

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## 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.
- **Alameda County Medical 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.](#)

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## TOP LINKS:

- **HIV:** FAQs for people living with HIV (PLWH) and Preguntas Frecuentes in Spanish, Guidance for PLWH (CDC), Guidance for HIV providers (HIVMA), Vaccines for PLWH (HIVMA), UNAIDS infosheet on COVID-19 vaccines and HIV
- **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 info in Asian languages
- **COVID Vaccines:** California State , CA vaccine tracker, Alameda County, Contra Costa County, Solano County
- **COVID exposure alerts in California:** CA Notify app
- **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
- **Public Health Department Updates:** Alameda County, Contra Costa County, Solano County, California State
- **COVID case/death data:** Alameda County, Contra Costa County, Solano County, California State, California (SF Chronicle), US (CDC), US by race (CDC), National/Global (JHU). **Variants:** in the US (CDC) and in California.
- **DIY Face Coverings and Masks:** CDC (easy no-sew), Kaiser (sewn), Maker Mask (sewn, science-based), Olson Mask (sewn)
- **COVID PPE, staffing or testing supplies:** Alameda County EMS– request PPE, request staffing or request testing supplies.

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## ALAMEDA COUNTY GUIDANCE:

[Click here](#) for all current approved businesses and activities.

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, antigen 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, testing in Skilled Nursing Facilities and COVID-19 vaccinations.

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

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## LOOKING FOR COVID-19 TESTING?

- **Alameda County COVID testing sites:** This webpage includes 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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