



Public Health Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Press Release

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Santa Cruz County Public Health Officials Confirm Second Case of COVID-19

SANTA CRUZ –The County of Santa Cruz Public Health Division is announcing a second case of COVID-19.

On Sunday, March 8, testing confirmed COVID-19 in a patient who presented with symptoms of coronavirus. The patient previously traveled to Seattle, and Public Health investigators have determined the individual likely contracted the virus there before returning home on a commercial flight.

Santa Cruz County Public Health is conducting a thorough investigation to identify potential exposures and notify contacts. The patient is now in isolation and recovering. Santa Cruz County Public Health is also urging residents to prepare for potential disruption by updating family emergency plans, and has issued updated social distancing and workplace guidelines (attached).

"Unfortunately, this new case confirms that COVID-19 is present in our community and is not an isolated case," said Dr. Gail Newel, County of Santa Cruz Health Officer. "I urge all community members to take steps to protect themselves and their families."

A prior case involving a passenger from the Grand Princess cruise ship which visited Mexico is still under investigation and observation. As commercial COVID-19 testing becomes more widely available this week, it is anticipated that the number of confirmed cases will likely increase, and residents should prepare themselves for cases confirming community spread.

While COVID-19 is non-lethal for the vast majority of patients and many do not require medical oversight, the disease does present a serious risk for medically vulnerable individuals, particularly those over 60 years old and people with certain pre-existing medical conditions.

On March 4, the Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer declared a local health emergency, and the County activated its Emergency Operation Center (EOC) to bolster response efforts. The County will



reevaluate increasing response efforts as the situation warrants.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, and may appear in as few as two or up to 14 days after exposure. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, contact your primary care physician's office, especially if you have recently traveled to areas with a COVID-19 outbreak or have had contact with a known case of COVID-19. Before seeking medical attention, call first to prevent possible transmission in the health care setting.

Santa Cruz County Public Health strongly urges community members to take precautions to help prevent the spread of illness:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, rubbing for at least 20 seconds;
- Use at least 60% alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are not available;
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hand, or use a tissue and discard;
- Avoid shaking hands;
- Don't touch your face with unwashed hands;
- Regularly clean surfaces touched by many people using normal household cleaners;
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick; and
- Get a flu shot to protect yourself and others from flu, which has similar symptoms to COVID-19.

You can also prepare for the possible disruption caused by an outbreak. Preparedness actions include:

- Make sure your emergency preparedness kit is up to date. Stock additional supplies if possible. Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for an Emergency Supply List and other preparedness materials
- Obtain two to three months' supply of your critical prescriptions. Stock up on essential medication for all family members.
- Prepare to work from home if possible.
- Prepare a childcare plan if you or a caregiver are sick.
- Make arrangements to manage a school dismissal of at least two weeks.
- Plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself.
- Take care of each other and check in by phone with friends, family and neighbors that are vulnerable to serious illness or death if they get COVID-19.
- Keep common spaces clean to help maintain a healthy environment for you and others. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly with disinfecting sprays, wipes or common household cleaning products.
- Our community may need volunteers. Think now about the skills you have and how can you help your community. Visit [Santa Cruz Volunteer Center – VIP](#) or [Santa Cruz County Medical Reserve Corps](#) for volunteer opportunities.

It is normal to feel some distress and uncertainty about the impact of COVID-19 on our community. Please rest assured that the County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency, along with our governmental and private partners, are working diligently to respond appropriately. We will keep you informed of new information as it develops.

For local information, residents may visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text "coronavirus" to 211211. Messaging rates may apply.