



Public Health Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Press Release

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PUBLIC HEALTH MONITORING COVID-19 CLUSTERS

Santa Cruz County, CA - The Santa Cruz County Public Health Division recently began investigating multiple clusters of COVID-19 cases involving family gatherings, and is encouraging everyone to maintain social distancing and follow shelter-in-place orders during the extended Memorial Day weekend.

Public Health has identified four separate clusters of COVID-19 transmission in the South County region. The investigations are still ongoing, but all known transmission is associated with close contact between households during family gatherings. These gatherings include interaction between people from different social cohorts, including a multi-generational Mother's Day gathering and a large gathering involving individuals who travelled from out-of-state.

Over the last week, the number of Santa Cruz County residents who have tested positive for COVID-19 increased 20 percent, a development which coincides with a lowering of restrictions on State and local shelter-in-place orders. Under the orders, non-essential travel is prohibited and gatherings of any size are not allowed.

"I want to thank the community for all they have done so far to stop the spread of COVID-19," said Santa Cruz County Health Officer Dr. Gail Newel. "But we can't let our guard down now, there are still more lives to save."

All clusters are being monitored and investigated by the Communicable Disease Unit, including contact tracing and isolation/quarantine guidance.



Public Health
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Santa Cruz County

“We understand that as the shelter-in-place orders enter their third month, people have a strong desire to gather with friends and family, particularly on holidays when the weather is good,” said Jen Herrera, Santa Cruz County Chief of Public Health. “We want residents to understand that they may unwittingly place those they love at risk for getting COVID-19, especially the most vulnerable among us.”

Should local counts continue to increase, the County’s efforts to reopen sectors of the community could be jeopardized or result in further restrictions.

Local beaches remain off limits between the hours of 11 a.m.-5 p.m., unless traversing the sand to engage in water activities. Residents are also advised to follow the Order to Wear Face Coverings while engaging others at work or in public. Those 12 and under are not required to wear a face covering and those two and under must not wear one. Face coverings should be washed frequently.

In addition, residents should continue following basic hygiene practices including:

- Washing your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your face
- Coughing or sneeze into your elbow
- Cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces
- Stay home when ill except to seek medical care

Testing locations, including information about populations served, hours of operation and contact information can be found on the County’s web site at www.santacruzhealth.org/savelives.

For local information on COVID-19, go to www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text “COVID19” to 211211. Residents may also call (831) 454-4242 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., seven days a week.

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