



County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY Public Health Division

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER ISSUES ORDER REQUIRING MASKING IN ACUTE CARE FACILITIES

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA – With the rise in respiratory viruses observed between fall and spring, a pattern that is anticipated to recur annually in Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer is issuing a Public Health Order, effective November 1, 2025 at 12:00 a.m., requiring use of face masks indoors by all individuals who are not patients in acute care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, surgical and maternity centers, and infusion centers such as dialysis and chemotherapy centers, during respiratory virus season.

"These respiratory viruses can cause serious illness, particularly in vulnerable groups such as infants, older adults, pregnant individuals, and those with weakened immune systems," said Dr. Lisa Hernandez, Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer. "This Order aims to reduce the spread of these viruses and protect those most at risk from severe outcomes, including hospitalization and death."

Regardless of vaccination status, all individuals who are not patients, including healthcare personnel and visitors, in acute care facilities must always wear a face mask during the respiratory virus season when indoors while working, conducting direct patient care, or visiting in patient facing areas.

Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and influenza is the best way to protect the vaccinated person from infection, hospitalization, or death from COVID-19 and influenza, as well as to lessen harm to others by reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and influenza. The California Department of Public Health has released their [2025-26 Respiratory Vaccine Recommendations](#). All eligible persons are strongly urged to be up to date on their COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccinations.

For more information, visit www.santacruzhealth.org.

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