



# County of Santa Cruz



---

## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY Public Health Division

1070 Emeline Avenue, Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(831) 454-7519 Fax: (831) 454-4770  
[santacruzhealth.org](http://santacruzhealth.org)

### Press Release

---

For Immediate Release

Contact: Corinne Hyland

Date: September 18, 2024

831-566-4370

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

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA – With the rise in influenza (flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19 cases observed between fall and spring, a pattern that is anticipated to recur annually in Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz County Health Officer is issuing a Health Order, effective November 1, 2024 at 12:00 a.m., requiring use of face masks indoors by all personnel and visitors 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 lead to severe illness especially among certain groups such as infants, older adults, pregnant women, and those with a weakened immune system,” said Dr. Lisa Hernandez, Santa Cruz County Health Officer. “This Order is issued to curb the spread of these viruses to vulnerable populations and minimize the risk of severe illness and death.”

Regardless of vaccination status, all healthcare personnel and visitors in acute care facilities must always wear a face mask during the respiratory virus season when indoors while conducting direct patient care or visiting a patient/resident in patient care 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. Therefore, all eligible persons are strongly urged to be up to date on their COVID-19 and flu vaccinations. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all adults 75 years and older receive the RSV vaccine as well as individuals 60 years and older who are at increased risk for severe

RSV. The RSV vaccine is also recommended for pregnant people between 32 and 36 weeks of pregnancy.

For more information, visit [www.santacruzhealth.org](http://www.santacruzhealth.org).

###