



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Bay Area Health Officials Urge Immediate Vaccination and Issue Orders Requiring Use of Face Coverings Indoors to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19**

*Counties of San Mateo, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Sonoma, and the City of Berkeley Indoor Masking Orders Take Effect Tuesday*

Vaccination continues to protect against severe COVID-19 illness, but with the COVID-19 Delta variant now infecting a small percentage of vaccinated people as well as many unvaccinated people, eight Bay Area health officers have issued Health Orders requiring masks indoors in public places. The Orders require all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to wear face coverings when indoors in public settings, with limited exceptions, starting at 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday, August 3.

Vaccines remain the most powerful tool in the fight against COVID-19, including the Delta variant. Nonetheless, the Delta variant is infecting a small percentage of the vaccinated in the Bay Area — who still remain strongly protected against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. In those instances of infection in a vaccinated person, a face covering prevents further spread. Bay Area health officials urge all unvaccinated residents 12 and older to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

“As San Mateo County joins its neighbors in issuing these orders, the goal is to avoid disrupting businesses and residents’ everyday activities,” said Scott Morrow, MD, San Mateo County’s health officer. “We want our communities to stay open while being as safe as possible.”

These Health Orders aim to reduce community transmission of COVID-19 and protect everyone. Health officials are very concerned by the substantial levels of community transmission now found across the Bay Area, especially among unvaccinated people. In part, this is due to the widespread COVID-19 Delta variant, which is substantially more transmissible than previous forms of the virus. Recent information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also indicates that even fully vaccinated individuals can in some cases spread the Delta variant to others, and so indoor use of face coverings provides an important added layer of protection.

The new Health Orders require wearing a well-fitting mask indoors in public settings. Indoor settings, whether public or private, are higher risk for COVID-19 transmission, especially when you are with people you do not live with. Health officials also recommend that all employers make face coverings available to individuals entering their businesses, and businesses are required to implement the indoor face covering order.

Today’s Health Orders are consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health, which recommend that fully vaccinated individuals wear masks while in indoor public settings. Bay Area Health Officers will



continue to monitor data, including increasing vaccination throughout the region, to determine when the Orders can be adjusted or lifted.

Vaccinations are available throughout San Mateo County, at County-sponsored clinics, community clinics, private health care providers, pharmacies and other venues.

[See a list of county-operated and -partner clinics, with times and locations, here.](#)

Appointments may be [accessed via MyTurn](#) four or more days before the date of the clinic — but appointments are not required.

The full text of the health order is available here: <https://www.smchealth.org/health-officer-updates/8221-ho-order-c19-12-face-covering>

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