

## Guidance for Vulnerable Populations at High Risk for Severe Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

SOLANO PUBLIC HEALTH | MARCH 11, 2020

This guidance is effective through March 31, 2020 and will be reevaluated thereafter.

COVID-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, often causes only mild symptoms or in some cases none at all. However, some people can become severely ill.

Those at higher risk include:

- People over 60 years of age. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.
- People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.

### Guidance for people most vulnerable for severe COVID-19 illness

- Stay away from crowded social gatherings as much as possible; this includes bingo gatherings, concerts, church gatherings, long flights and cruises where large numbers of people are within arm's length of one another.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face, nose or mouth as these are how viruses get into the body.
- If you are sick with fever, cough or shortness of breath, call your doctor right away.

### Guidance for organizations that serve vulnerable populations

- Take all necessary measures to ensure all employees and visitors who are experiencing any symptoms of illness stay home and avoid contact with others.
- Post visual alerts ([signs, posters](#)) at entrances and in strategic places providing instruction that individuals should stay home when sick, as well as other general hygiene precautions to prevent respiratory illnesses.
- Be extra vigilant in following recommendations regarding cleaning of high touch surfaces, including counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
- Consider postponing crowded social gatherings (e.g., a large bingo gathering, movie screening, etc.) where people are within arms' length of one another.
- Support and monitor hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as cough etiquette by residents, visitors, and employees.
- Put alcohol-based hand rub in the rooms and ensure that sinks are well-stocked with soap and paper towels for handwashing.

### Guidance for family members and caregivers

- Even if you are not ill, minimize visiting hospitals, long-term care facilities, or nursing homes to the extent possible. If you do need to visit one of these facilities, limit your time there and keep 6 feet away from patients and employees of the facility.
- When experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness (cold, cough, fever or shortness of breath), stay home and avoid visiting relatives.
- Check in by phone with friends and family who are vulnerable to serious illness if they get COVID-19. Consider visiting relatives or clients in other ways, like Skype, FaceTime, phone calls or email. If you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.
- Know what medications your loved one is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- Monitor food and medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) as needed.
- Call the doctor first before taking your family member to the doctor if they are experiencing symptoms of a respiratory illness.

For more information, visit [www.solanocounty.com/publichealth](http://www.solanocounty.com/publichealth) or call the Public Health Coronavirus Warm Line at 707-784-8988.

## Social Distancing Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

SOLANO PUBLIC HEALTH | MARCH 11, 2020

These recommendations are effective through March 31, 2020 and will be reevaluated thereafter.

Solano Public Health is making recommendations for social distancing to reduce the spread of the new coronavirus and protect community health. Social distancing is a means to reduce interactions between people and slow the spread of the disease in our community. The recommendations will protect the health of vulnerable populations who are more likely to be susceptible for severe COVID-19 illnesses, as well as the community at large.

### What are recommendations for canceling large gatherings?

The primary method by which this disease is transmitted involves respiratory droplets from infected individuals. Not all events increase the risk for this type of transmission. For those that do, we recommend postponing or canceling crowded gatherings and community events where large numbers of people, particularly strangers, are within arm's length of one another. These events include concerts, conventions and large community events.

- If the event cannot be canceled, consider modifying the event by:
  - Instructing participants or event staff to not attend prior to the event if they have any respiratory symptoms (cough, cold) or fever
  - Having handwashing capabilities, hand sanitizers and tissues
  - Cleaning high-touch surface areas like counters, tabletops and handrails
  - Ensuring event venues are well-ventilated and finding ways to create physical space to minimize close contact as much as possible
  - Providing an alternate forum (such as video conferences) for non-essential gatherings
- Consider canceling non-essential events primarily for or attended by older adults and people with chronic medical conditions at higher risk for severe illness.

### What are recommendations for workplaces and businesses?

For workplaces and businesses, consider minimizing exposure of the disease by:

- Urging employees to stay home when they are sick and maximizing flexibility in sick leave benefits
- Implementing telecommuting and teleconferencing options for employees, where appropriate
- Cleaning high-touch surface areas like countertops and handrails
- Minimizing in-person meetings and conferences where employees are within arm's length of one another

### What are recommendations for schools and schoolchildren?

- We strongly recommend that students and staff not attend school if they are sick. If you have a child with chronic health conditions, consult your doctor about school attendance.
- School closures are generally not recommended; however, in certain cases where there is COVID-19 exposure, schools and school district officials are advised to consult with Solano Public Health regarding appropriate next steps.

### How can people prepare for an elevated risk of COVID-19 exposure?

To prepare for an elevated risk of exposure in our community, consider:

- Having enough shelf-stable food and extra cleaning supplies on hand to last at least two weeks
- Ensuring you have a supply of all essential medications for your family
- Making a plan for how you can care for a sick family member without getting sick yourself

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