

**3/6/2020**

## **Guidance from the Contra Costa Health Services For Persons at Higher Risk from COVID-19**

*Guidance for individuals and organizations for protecting persons at higher-risk of serious illness:*

Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) is making the following recommendations for individuals who are at higher risk of becoming seriously ill if they contract COVID-19. This new guidance for protecting persons at higher-risk of serious illness due to COVID-19 supplements previous ongoing recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and CCHS.

### **Who is at higher risk?**

Information about risk factors for COVID-19 infection is evolving, but the best evidence currently available makes clear that risk of severe illness begins to increase at age 50 for those who contract COVID-19, and increases with age (i.e., an 80-year-old person is at greater risk than a 70-year-old person). The highest risk group are persons age 80 and over.

Adults and children with underlying medical problems also are likely at higher risk for severe disease, including persons with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those who are immunocompromised.

### **What should I do if I am at higher risk?**

Contra Costa Health Services is recommending that persons at higher risk avoid mass gatherings such as parades, sporting events, and concerts where large numbers of people are within arm's length of one another. This would **not** include typical office environments, grocery stores, or shopping centers, where it is unusual for large numbers of people to be within arm's length of one another.



## **I run an organization that primarily serves seniors or medically compromised individuals (e.g. nursing homes). What should I do?**

Contra Costa Health Services is recommending that organizations that primarily serve seniors or medically vulnerable individuals:

- cancel mass gatherings (e.g., a large bingo gathering, celebrations, movie screening, etc.); ensure they are extra vigilant in following recommendations regarding cleaning of high touch surfaces, including counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables;
- take all necessary measures to ensure all employees, visitors, and persons served who are experiencing any symptoms of illness stay home and avoid contact with others; and
- enhance screening of visitors, staff, and residents for symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., fever, cough, difficulty breathing).

**This is an evolving situation; therefore these recommendations may change and we recommend that individuals and organizations ensure they are watching for new guidance and following that guidance as it is released.**

As a reminder, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and all other communicable diseases such as flu, colds, etc., the CDC recommends that all persons follow respiratory hygiene etiquette measures, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are [sick](#).
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and clean your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.



- CDC does **not** recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for **health workers** and **people who are taking care of someone in close settings** (at home or in a healthcare facility).

For more information, please visit our website at [ccheath.org/coronavirus](https://ccheath.org/coronavirus).

