

COVID-19 and Common Respiratory Viruses

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidance for Community Care Facilities

NOTE: On January 9, 2024, both CDPH and Cal/OSHA updated the [State Public Health Officer Order for COVID-19 Disease Control and Prevention](#) and related guidance documents for the general population and the [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#) for workplaces, respectively.

However, our local COVID-19 isolation guidance for community care facilities (CCFs) remains unchanged and more protective. The infectious period for COVID-19 transmission has not changed. Because of the congregate living arrangements in CCFs, the risk of COVID-19 transmission remains higher in these settings compared with the general population. In addition, there is a high prevalence of [certain medical conditions](#) associated with severe COVID-19 among people residing in CCFs, increasing the risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19 in this population.

Per Cal/OSHA, all individuals with COVID-19 need to wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask for a total of 10 days after their symptoms began or, if they do not have symptoms, the date of their initial positive test, whenever they are around others. This includes individuals who test positive or are diagnosed with COVID-19 and have no symptoms or only mild symptoms.

Currently, staff at all licensed healthcare facilities, including Intermediate Care Facilities and Congregate Living Healthcare Facilities, are required to receive the current season's flu and updated COVID-19 vaccination or wear a respiratory mask for the duration of respiratory virus season while in contact with residents or when in any resident care area in the facility. Additionally, when the CDC designated Los Angeles County COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level meets or exceeds the Medium Level, all staff, regardless of vaccination status, and visitors in Intermediate Care Facilities and Congregate Living Healthcare Facilities are required to wear well-fitting masks while in contact with residents or when in any resident care area in the facility. This will be under review when the CDC designated Los Angeles County COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level has been at Low for at least 14 consecutive days.

Some minor updates to this guidance document have also been made to incorporate best practices for preventing transmission of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza.

Changes are highlighted in yellow.

COVID-19, influenza (flu), and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are common respiratory diseases with cough and cold symptoms. Most people recover on their own without complications, but some people are at [higher risk of getting very sick](#), especially seniors and those with underlying medical conditions. This guidance is intended for community care facilities (CCFs). CCFs are congregate residential care settings that are not skilled nursing facilities but that provide some level of care to residents. CCFs include residential facilities licensed under the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD), as well as substance use treatment centers, behavioral and mental health treatment facilities, and licensed or unlicensed group homes.

This guidance is to help CCFs:

- Prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 within their facility.
- Prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 between and outside of facilities.



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Facilities licensed by CCLD should look at the CDSS Provider Information Notices (PINs) [website](#) for all licensing requirements. Facilities licensed by other entities should ensure they read the most up to date requirements from their licensing body. Facilities that fall under the Cal/OSHA [Aerosol Transmissible Disease Standard](#) or the [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#), should also stay abreast of the latest requirements.

Note: where differences exist between the most current PINs, Cal/OSHA, CDPH and LA County guidance, CCFs are to follow the most protective guidance and requirements.

Visit the LAC DPH [COVID-19 CCF webpage](#) for related resources. You can also find additional information and the latest recommendations about [COVID-19](#), [flu](#), [RSV](#), and [respiratory viruses](#) at their respective webpages. If you have questions and would like to speak to someone, call the LA County Information line at 2-1-1, which is available 24 hours a day. We appreciate your efforts to keep Los Angeles County healthy.

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Guidance for Community Care Facilities

Screening and Signage

- Staff must continue to observe residents for cough, cold, flu, and COVID-19 symptoms and take appropriate action when needed.
- Staff, visitors, volunteers, and other individuals entering the facility should self-screen for cough, cold, flu, and COVID-19 symptoms.
- Post signs reminding staff, visitors, and all other individuals to not enter the facility if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or are positive for COVID-19.
- Post signs for residents recommending masks and the importance of hand hygiene.

For examples of signage see DPH [COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).

Vaccination

Being [up to date](#) with all recommended vaccine doses is the best way to protect against serious illness and death caused by COVID-19, flu, and RSV.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a [2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccine](#) to protect themselves and reduce the spread of the virus. The updated vaccine can increase prior protection (from previous vaccination or infection) that may have decreased over time.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a [flu vaccine](#) every season. Vaccination is especially important for those at higher risk of getting very sick with the flu. Getting vaccinated may also reduce the risk of ending up in the hospital.

[RSV immunizations](#) protect people at highest risk of getting very sick with RSV, including infants, toddlers, and adults 60 years and older. Babies can be protected either through maternal vaccination during pregnancy at 32-36 weeks, or by giving an RSV antibody immunization to infants younger than 8 months. Adults 60 years and older should talk to their healthcare provider about RSV vaccination.

Continue to offer COVID-19 vaccinations and strongly encourage individuals to stay up to date with their vaccinations as recommended. Community Care Facilities can request LAC DPH on-site assistance with vaccinating their staff and residents by completing the LAC DPH Mobile Vaccine Team [interest form/formulario de interes](#).

Residents:

Facilities should ensure that all residents are up to date any COVID-19 vaccine doses recommended for them.

- Offer age appropriate COVID-19 vaccine doses to all residents as soon as they are eligible for a dose.
- Have a system for checking if all new residents are up to date with COVID-19 vaccines (vaccine cards, online records, etc.), and have a system in place for vaccinating the individual if they are overdue for a recommended vaccine dose. A vaccine dose may be delayed for up to 90 days after recent COVID-19 infection.

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- Continue to improve vaccination rates for residents including re-offering the recommended vaccine dose to persons who initially decline. See [Best Practices for Improving Vaccination in CCFs](#) for more strategies.

Staff:

- Effective 12/27/2023 per the [Health Officer Order](#) on Immunization or Masking for HCW, staff in congregate living health facilities (CLHFs) and intermediate care facilities (ICFs) are required to be vaccinated with both the influenza and COVID-19 vaccines for the 2023-2024 respiratory virus season, or wear a mask while in contact with residents or when in any resident care area in the facility. Further updates to this order require staff, regardless of vaccination status, and visitors to wear well-fitting masks inside the facility while the [Los Angeles County COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level](#) is at Medium or High, or while LAC DPH deems it necessary during periods of high COVID-19 transmission in the community. Staff and visitors in other types of CCFs are also strongly recommended to stay up to date with influenza and COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccines are free and widely available across LA County

Visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vaccines> to find locations. Call 1-833-540-0473 for help making an appointment or to set up vaccination for people who are homebound. Phone lines are open from 8am to 8:00pm, 7 days a week. Information is also available in many languages 24/7 by calling 2-1-1.

See [CDC Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines](#) for detailed vaccine recommendations by age.

Testing and Treatment

Residents and staff with cough, cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms should get tested for COVID-19. Facilities should refer to the CAL/OSHA [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#) for testing and management of staff with close workplace contacts, work exclusion, return to work criteria, and outbreak/response testing. Where differences exist between the most current PINs, Cal/OSHA, CDPH and LA County, CCFs are to follow the most protective guidance and requirements.

COVID-19 treatment can prevent people from getting very sick. All residents in CCFs with COVID-19 or who are symptomatic close contacts should be evaluated for treatment for COVID-19 promptly. The oral medicines must be started within 5 days of when symptoms begin. Most adults and some children qualify for treatment if they have symptoms of COVID-19 AND either test positive for COVID-19 OR a doctor recommends treatment.

Free and low-cost treatments are available for eligible patients. Contact a healthcare provider or call the Public Health Call Center at 1-833-540-0473. For more information, visit [Medicine to Treat COVID-19](#).

The LAC DPH Mobile Therapeutics Team (MTT): Facilities with 3 or more patients with symptomatic COVID-19 infection can request the MTT to come to the facility to assess and treat residents.

See flyer: [English](#) | [Español](#).

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During the respiratory virus season (typically fall through early spring), facilities should also consider referring individuals with cough/cold symptoms and risk factors for influenza testing, particularly if they test negative for COVID-19. Antiviral medications for influenza are available by prescription for adults and children who get sick with flu, especially individuals at higher risk of serious complications. These medicines work best if started within two days of when symptoms begin. For more information, visit [CDC Flu Treatment](#).

Infection Prevention and Control Plan

All facilities should develop an infection control plan in accordance with regulatory requirements in [CDSS PIN 22-13-ASC](#). This includes having a designated Infection Preventionist.

Infection Preventionist training courses and information on how to build an infection prevention program can be found on the DPH [CCF Infection Prevention webpage](#).

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Well-fitting masks [help prevent the spread of COVID-19](#). County public indoor mask wearing rules and recommendations change based on local metrics. These metrics are updated regularly and published on the [LA County COVID-19 Response Plan website](#).

Residents

- All residents must be provided a clean mask on request.
- Residents with cough, cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms should wear a well-fitting surgical mask or respirator around others.
- Residents with COVID-19 must wear a well-fitting mask (surgical masks or respirator recommended) if they must be around others through Day 10 as per isolation instructions: ph.lacounty.gov/covidcommunity.
- Residents who are close contacts should wear a well-fitting mask (surgical mask or respirator recommended) indoors around others through Day 10 as per instructions for close contacts: ph.lacounty.gov/covidcommunity.

Staff

- Effective 12/27/2023 per the [Health Officer Order](#) on Immunization or Masking for HCW, staff and visitors in congregate living health facilities (CLHFs) and intermediate care facilities (ICFs) are required to wear well-fitting masks inside the facility while the [Los Angeles County COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level](#) is at Medium or High, or while LAC DPH deems it necessary during periods of high COVID-19 transmission in the community. Staff and visitors in other types of CCFs are also strongly recommended to wear well-fitting masks while inside the facility.
- Depending on facility type, your facility may fall under the Cal/OSHA [Aerosol Transmissible Disease Standard](#) or the [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#). Even in facilities where N95 respirators are not required for the care of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases, staff and caregivers are strongly recommended to wear N95 respirators when caring for these residents. Please ensure you are complying with the regulations that apply to your facility. In addition, they must wear any other

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appropriate PPE pursuant to facility specific regulations (see [CDC Use of PPE](#) poster). Reminder: Where differences exist between the most current PINs, Cal/OSHA, CDPH and LA County, CCFs are to follow the most protective guidance and requirements.

- Staff with COVID-19 infection who are permitted to return to work must wear a well-fitting, high quality mask at all times around others through at least Day 10. Surgical masks or respirators are strongly recommended.
- Staff who are close contacts should wear a well-fitting mask at all times while they are at work around others through Day 10. Surgical masks or respirators are strongly recommended.
- Facilities should consider sharing with staff the LAC DPH one-pager for workers [Know which Masks Provide the Best Protection](#) (available in multiple languages at ph.lacounty.gov/masks).

Visitors

- Effective 12/27/2023 per the [Health Officer Order](#) on Immunization or Masking for HCW, staff and visitors in CLHFs and ICFs are required to wear well-fitting masks inside the facility while the [Los Angeles County COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level](#) is at Medium or High, or while LAC DPH deems it necessary during periods of high COVID-19 transmission in the community. Staff and visitors in other types of CCFs are also strongly recommended to wear well-fitting masks while inside the facility.
- When not required to do so, visitors to the facility should be encouraged to wear well-fitting masks while in the facility.
- Visitors to a resident in isolation for COVID-19 should be provided with the same type of PPE used by facility staff. Visitors do not need a fit tested N95 respirator but should be instructed on how to perform a [seal check](#).

When masks are not required, all individuals may choose to wear a mask without fear of discrimination or retaliation.

For additional mask resources, see:

- CDPH [Guidance for Use of Face Masks](#) and [Mask Q&A](#)
- LA County [Mask Wearing Rules and Recommendations](#)

Group Activities, Communal Dining, and Visitation

Group activities and communal dining are open to all residents not in isolation. Group activities and communal dining should occur in large rooms with good ventilation or outside, if possible.

For the most current visitation information please refer to the [CDSS PIN 23-07-ASC](#).

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COVID-19 Cases and Close Contacts

Residents:

- With cough, cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms should avoid others and test for COVID-19.
- Who test positive for or a healthcare provider diagnoses with COVID-19 must isolate for five days.
 - Isolation may end after Day 5 (between Days 6-10) ONLY if all of the following criteria are met:
 - No fever for at least 1 day (24 hours) without the use of fever-reducing medications.
 - No symptoms, or symptoms are mild and improving.
 - A negative test is strongly recommended prior to leaving isolation between Days 6 and 10. If the person is immunocompromised or has had severe COVID-19, they may need to isolate longer than 10 days.
- Who are close contacts to a COVID-19 case should follow all instructions for [close contacts](#).

Staff:

- With symptoms of possible COVID-19 should be excluded from work pending COVID-19 test results.
- Who test positive for or are diagnosed with COVID-19 must be excluded from the workplace until they meet all [return to work requirements for Healthcare Personnel](#).
 - Facilities must ensure that all COVID-19 cases returning to the workplace wear a well-fitting mask through Day 10 (Day 0 is symptom onset day; if they have no symptoms, Day 0 is the test collection day of first positive test).
- Who are close contacts may continue to work as long as they have no symptoms of COVID-19. They should test for COVID-19 3-5 days after their last close contact. For 10 days, they are to wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors and monitor their health. See [Employees that are Close Contacts](#).

Note: if there is an outbreak in the facility, testing and masking is required by Cal/OSHA.

Facilities should refer to the CAL/OSHA [COVID-19 Prevention Non-Emergency Regulations](#) for testing of close workplace contacts, work exclusion, return to work criteria, and outbreak/response testing. **Reminder: Where differences exist between the most current PINs, Cal/OSHA, CDPH and LA County, CCFs are to follow the most protective guidance and requirements.**

Case Reporting

CCFs must report within 24 hours when they know of at least one COVID-19 case in a resident or at least 3 or more linked COVID-19 cases among staff within a 7-day period. Report cases to LAC DPH by using the RedCap Reporting Form: <https://redcap.link/lac-covid> or by calling 888-397-3993 during daytime hours or 213-240-7821.

For more details, including the definition of linked cases, see the Los Angeles County Health Officer Order [COVID-19 Reporting Requirements](#).

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Cleaning & Disinfecting Practices

- Regularly cleaning surfaces helps prevent the spread of germs that make people sick.
- Facilities should regularly clean frequently touched surfaces and objects such as door handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, touchpads, and restroom fixtures. They should also clean other surfaces when they are visibly dirty.
- In addition to cleaning, the CDC recommends disinfecting areas where people have been obviously ill (for instance, vomiting on facility surfaces).

See the [CCF Infection Prevention webpage](#) for resources on cleaning and disinfection training.

Additional Resources

LACDPH

- COVID-19 website: ph.lacounty.gov/Coronavirus and [sitemap](#)
- [CCF Infection Prevention Webpage](#)
- [Los Angeles Health Alert Network](#): Communications to health care professionals regarding time-sensitive topics such as local or national disease outbreaks and emerging health risks.

California Department of Social Services

- [Provider Information Notices \(PINs\) by Program](#)
- [ASC COVID-19 PINs by Topic](#)
- [CRP COVID-19 PINs by Topic](#)

CDC

- [COVID Prevention](#)
- [Ventilation in Buildings](#) | [Ventilation in Homes](#)
- [Hand Hygiene](#)

