



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



Marin County COVID-19 status update: March 10th, 2020

Message from Dr. Matt Willis, Marin County Public Health Officer

Benita McLarin, FACHE
DIRECTOR

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

Lisa M. Santora, MD, MPH
DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

3240 Kerner Boulevard
San Rafael, CA 94901
415 473 4163 T
415 473 6002 F
415 473 3232 TTY
marinhhs.org/public-health

In today's update, Marin County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is announcing new guidance designed to reduce the spread of the virus in our community. This updated guidance covers workplaces and businesses, large community gatherings, schools, higher risk and sick community members and guidance for the general public.

We recognize that our community as a whole is concerned regarding COVID-19. Going about our lives as normal in a social setting is vital for community well-being, and we do not take these steps lightly. With increased transmission of COVID-19 regionally, we have to prioritize health first. Know that this is a fluid situation and we are constantly reevaluating our recommendations as the situation unfolds here in Marin.

This is a critical moment in the growing concerns of COVID-19 in Marin County when such guidance measures can potentially slow the spread of the disease. The following guidance was created after significant deliberation. Marin HHS also weighed the potential benefits to our community's health along with the significant disruptive effect that these recommendations could have.

In consultation with our local, state and federal partners, we developed these recommendations based on the increased spread of COVID-19.

Guidance for workplaces and businesses

Employers should take steps to make it more feasible for their employees to work in ways that minimize close contact with large numbers of people.

In addition, employers should:

- Suspend nonessential employee travel.
- Minimize the number of employees working within arm's length of one another, including minimizing or canceling large in-person meetings and conferences.
- Urge employees to stay home when they are sick and maximize flexibility in sick leave benefits.
- Not require a doctor's note for employees that are sick as healthcare offices may be very busy and unable to provide that documentation right away.
- Consider use of telecommuting options for appropriate employees.
- Consider staggering start and end times to reduce large numbers of people coming together at the same time.

Guidance for Persons Hosting Mass Gatherings and Large Community Events

As of March 9, Marin HHS is recommending the cancellation or postponement of nonessential indoor gatherings of more than 100 people to prevent the spread of [COVID-19](#). This recommendation is in place for two weeks and will be re-evaluated as new information becomes available. Marin HHS' [Public Health Division](#) is not making the same recommendation for outdoor events at this time because the risk for transmission outdoors is low.

If you are still bringing smaller groups of people together:

- Urge anyone who is sick to not attend.
- Encourage those who are at higher risk for serious illness to not attend.
- Try to find ways to give people more physical space so that they aren't in close contact as much as possible.
- Encourage attendees to follow increased hygiene, such as:
 - Washing their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable.
 - Avoid close contact with other people
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
 - Covering their cough or sneeze with a tissue - if available - or into their elbow
 - Clean surfaces with standard cleaners.

Guidance for People at Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19 Illness

Marin HHS is recommending that persons at higher risk of severe illness should stay home and away from crowded social gatherings of people as much as possible such as parades, conferences, sporting events, and concerts where large numbers of people are within arm's length of one another.

Those at higher risk include:

- People over 65 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 Schools

Marin HHS is not recommending closing schools at this time. We encourage all school officials to carefully review and follow the CDC's

guidance for K-12 schools and childcare centers, as well as our recommendations for mass gatherings and large events. We are aware that schools in our community may need to make decisions about postponement or cancelation of specific activities.

If a staff member or student in a specific school confirmed to have COVID-19, Marin HHS will consider, based on the specific facts and circumstances of that case, whether closure of that school is warranted. The reason we are not recommending school closures at this time is because children have not been shown to be a high-risk group for serious illness from this virus. As much as possible, children should be allowed to carry on with their education and normal activities.

Some children have underlying health conditions, such as weakened immune systems, that put them at higher risk. Caregivers of children with underlying health conditions should consult with healthcare providers about whether their children should stay home.

Guidance for people who are sick

Stay home when you are sick. We are not recommending COVID-19 testing for people who have mild to moderate respiratory illness unless they have had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case or have a history of travel to an affected geographic area within 14 days of symptom onset. Do not go out in public when you are sick. Avoid medical settings in general unless necessary. If you are experiencing cough or fever, and if it is not an emergency, call your doctor's office before going in. They will help guide any decisions regarding testing.

Guidance for the general public

- Even if you are not ill, avoid 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. We recommend only immediate family and essential visitors have contact with residents of elder care facilities.
- **Do not go to the emergency room unless essential.** Emergency rooms need to be able to serve those with the most critical needs. If you have symptoms like cough, fever, or other respiratory problems, contact your regular doctor first.
- Stay home when sick and away from others in your household.
- Practice excellent personal hygiene habits, including washing your hands with soap and water frequently, coughing into a tissue or your elbow, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Stay away from people who are ill, especially if you are at higher risk for serious illness.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects (like doorknobs and light switches). Regular household cleaners are effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you've just washed your hands.
- Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, eat healthy foods, and manage your stress to keep your immunity strong.
- 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).
- Stay informed. Information is changing frequently.

Where to get the latest information:

Visit the official [Marin County Coronavirus webpage](https://MarinHHS.org/coronavirus) (MarinHHS.org/coronavirus) to review answers to frequently asked questions or subscribe to receive email updates. Individuals can contact Marin Health and Human Services with non-medical questions about the coronavirus by calling (415) 473-7191 (Monday – Friday, 9:30am to 12-noon and 1pm to 5pm) or emailing COVID-19@marincounty.org.

In addition, you look for updates on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) & Nextdoor.

COVID-19 activity in Marin:

Starting today, we are changing the structure of the daily case status updates. Due to increased testing capacity at multiple locations, we will no longer be reporting the number of tests performed. We will report the number of confirmed cases, and whether these cases represent known exposures or community transmission.

- There is one case of COVID-19 in Marin County (affecting a Marin County Resident), related to the Grand Princess Cruise ship.
- As of March 10, there are no confirmed cases of local transmission in Marin County.
- To date, Marin health officials are awaiting confirmation from CDC and CDPH on whether there are any Marin County residents on the Grand Princess Cruise – Hawaiian voyage at the Port of Oakland.
- As of March 10, there are 168 cases and two deaths in California, according to the California Department of Public Health.