



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Masking Indoors Recommended this Winter as Respiratory Viruses Spread

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Health & Human Services Agency (HHS) recommends that everybody 2 years old and older wear a mask in indoor public places this winter. The new recommendation is based on the increasing spread of several respiratory viruses, including influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID. According to the Sewer Coronavirus Alert Network, wastewater levels of influenza, RSV, and SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) are increasing in Yolo County. Hospitalizations and emergency department visits for respiratory illnesses are also increasing, along with absences from school and work.

With this recommendation, Yolo County HHS is moving away from earlier masking guidance and corresponding signs that were specific to low, medium, and high COVID-19 levels. Because multiple viruses are circulating, recommendations to mask are now based on combined respiratory virus levels rather than a single virus. Businesses and organizations using the old signs are asked to take them down and replace them with a new sign, [found here](#), recommending masking based on the increased transmission of several respiratory viruses.

“This winter is the first in several years where we are seeing significant flu and RSV activity, in addition to COVID-19, so we are now making masking recommendations based on all circulating respiratory viruses, not just on COVID,” said Yolo County Health Officer Dr. Aimee Sisson. “Wearing a high-quality mask indoors is a great way to protect yourself and others from respiratory viruses like flu, RSV, and COVID-19.”

Respiratory viruses like RSV, influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and those that cause the common cold spread through respiratory droplets. Contact with respiratory droplets can occur when an infected person coughs or sneezes near you and you get droplets in your eyes, nose, or mouth. Droplets can also spread when someone touches a surface with the virus on it, like a doorknob, and then touches their face before washing their hands. COVID-19 can also be transmitted through smaller particles called aerosols that stay in the air for extended periods of time and travel over long distances before being breathed in.

By wearing a mask that fits well and filters well, you can protect yourself against respiratory viruses even if others around you are not masked. High-quality masks like N95, KN95, and KF94s are the most protective, followed by surgical masks. Cloth masks are the least protective. Choose the best mask in terms of fit and filtration that you can consistently wear. Children under 2 are not recommended to wear a mask due to the risk of suffocation.

Masks are an important layer of protection against respiratory viruses and work best when combined with additional protections like COVID-19 boosters, flu shots, frequent handwashing, staying home when sick, and covering any coughs or sneezes. Persons who have cold- or flu-like symptoms and who test negative for COVID-19 should continue to stay home from school, work, and other activities until they are feeling better and

have been without fever for at least 24 hours. Visit myturn.ca.gov to find a vaccine clinic near you. If you test positive for COVID-19, contact your doctor or a [test-to-treat site](#) immediately to seek [treatment](#). Treatments work best when started soon after symptoms begin. Additionally, [here is a video clip](#) of Dr. Sisson speaking on this topic.

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