



# COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Indoor Masking Optional in Yolo County Effective May 1**

**(Woodland, CA)** – Yolo County Public Health has revised its indoor masking guidance, now making masking optional indoors, effective May 1, 2023.

With clinics and hospitals filled with ill patients and widespread absences from school and work in late 2022, a recommendation for all persons 2 years and older to wear a mask indoors was put in place to protect against COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and other respiratory viruses broadly circulating at the time. Fortunately, the respiratory virus situation has since improved. Wastewater levels of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 are low in Yolo County (<https://data.wastewaterscan.org/>), along with levels of influenza, RSV and human metapneumovirus. Therefore, effective May 1, the masking guidance for persons 2 years and older is to consider masking in indoor settings, aligning with current COVID-19 guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC has designated Yolo County as having a Low COVID-19 Community Level which is based on a combination of hospital-related metrics and new COVID-19 cases in the community. In communities where the COVID-19 Community Level is Low, CDPH advises that people wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by their own personal level of risk. Vulnerable persons, such as older adults, persons with underlying conditions or compromised immune systems, and those who live with them, are encouraged to consider wearing a mask in crowded indoor public spaces.

Even when the COVID-19 Community Level is Low, people are advised to wear a mask in certain situations:

- For 10 days after close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- When around others indoors between days 6 and 10 after a COVID-19 infection
- In indoor areas of public transportation and transportation hubs

Businesses or organizations displaying County-provided signs recommending masking are asked to take the signs down for now, although the signs might be needed again if the COVID-19 situation changes. Businesses and other entities are reminded that they can choose to require masking on their premises (with exceptions for children under 2 and persons with conditions that prevent wearing a mask) and that no person can be stopped from wearing a mask as a condition of participation in an activity or entry into a venue or business, unless wearing a mask would pose a safety hazard.

“After a tough fall and winter with high levels of respiratory viral illness due to COVID-19, flu and RSV, I am pleased to be able to lift the masking recommendation and transition to optional masking in indoor spaces in Yolo County,” said Dr. Aimee Sisson, Yolo County’s Public Health Officer. “While COVID-19 has not gone away, current levels of the virus that causes COVID-19 are low and flu season has ended. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 metrics and may need to recommend masking again if disease levels rise.”

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