

**Redwood City** – With cases of COVID-19 rising locally and increased circulation of the highly transmissible Delta variant, the counties of San Mateo, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Sonoma, and the City of Berkeley recommend that everyone, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors in public places to ensure easy verification that all unvaccinated people are masked in those settings and as an extra precautionary measure for all.

In June, the Delta variants comprised [43 percent of all specimens sequenced in California](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted that Delta variants are now responsible for [58 percent of new infections across the country](#).

Fully vaccinated people are well-protected from infections and serious illness due to known COVID-19 variants including Delta variants, and vaccinating as many people as possible, as soon as possible, continues to be our best defense against severe COVID-19 infection, and the harm it can do to our region. Vaccines are safe, effective, free, and widely available to everyone 12 and older.

Out of an abundance of caution, people are recommended to wear masks indoors in settings like grocery or retail stores, theaters, and family entertainment centers, even if they are fully vaccinated as an added layer of protection for unvaccinated residents.

Businesses are urged to adopt universal masking requirements for customers entering indoor areas of their businesses to provide better protection to their employees and customers. [Workplaces must comply with Cal/OSHA requirements](#) and fully vaccinated employees are encouraged to wear masks indoors if their employer has not confirmed the vaccination status of those around them.

“The Delta variant has higher transmissibility, which means it is more contagious. The epidemic is spreading faster in communities because the virus is more contagious. The good news is that the vaccines are effective against the Delta variant,” said Louise Rogers, chief of San Mateo County Health.

“Unfortunately, the bad news is that because vaccination gaps remain, there is an increase of cases throughout the Bay Area and California, primarily in unvaccinated communities. In reports throughout the country, over 95 percent of hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID are among those who are unvaccinated,” Rogers said.

Bay Area Health Officers will revisit this recommendation in the coming weeks as they continue to monitor transmission rates, hospitalizations, deaths, and increasing vaccination rates throughout the region. Data can be monitored here: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

“After vaccination, masking is the next most powerful tool we have to protect ourselves and each other during this latest wave of infections,” said Alameda County Health Officer Dr. Nicholas Moss. “Wearing masks, especially indoors and in crowded outdoor settings, will help us contain this more transmissible variant.”

People are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. People with only one vaccine dose of Pfizer or Moderna not fully protected. Completion of the vaccine series is necessary to provide full protection.

Visit <https://www.smchealth.org/vaccine-clinic-calendar> to find a vaccination site in San Mateo County or call the California COVID-19 Hotline at 1-833-422-4255.

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