



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 9, 2020

MERCED COUNTY, CITIES ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO “MASK UP”

MERCED—Due to a rapid increase of COVID-19 cases, Merced County and its six cities are encouraging residents to wear face coverings to slow the spread of COVID-19 and reopen the economy.

The campaign, known as “Mask-Up,” is intended to educate the public on the importance of face coverings and address “hotspots” throughout the County that are experiencing spikes of cases. The campaign will include public education efforts, materials promoting mask wearing, and mask distribution in various locations.

The use of face coverings is now mandated by the State and County. Wear a face covering whenever you’re out in public—it’s the safe thing to do, it’s the courteous thing to do, and it’s the right thing to do.

Face coverings are a proven way to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and are required to be worn:

- Inside of, or in line to enter, any indoor public space;
- When obtaining healthcare services;
- Waiting for or riding on public transportation or while in any private or ride-sharing vehicle including operators of the transportation;
- When at the workplace or performing work off-site;
- While outdoors in public spaces when physical distancing is not feasible.

The more face coverings are used, the faster we can collectively stem the spread of COVID-19 and reopen parts of the economy. The alternative is the State imposing an extended shutdown on more sectors of our economy due to the rising infection rate. Please do your part so we can stop the spread and reopen.

Some masks, such as N95s, are more effective than others in terms of preventing illness. However, the main purpose of cloth face coverings or other types of masks is to prevent respiratory droplets from infecting others when you cough, sneeze or talk. It’s important to remember that some people infected with COVID-19 don’t show symptoms, while the disease is deadly for others. Wearing a mask is a sign that you’re being considerate of those around you that may have compromised immune systems. Face coverings/masks are not recommended for children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is incapacitated.

Please encourage your family and friends to wear face coverings as well. You can do this by taking a photo of yourself wearing a face covering in public and posting it to social media using the #MaskMonday hashtag. And feel free to tag the Merced County Department of Public Health, Merced County, or your home city!

While face coverings are a critically important aspect of reducing the infection rate in Merced County, it should be combined with other protective measures such as:

- Social distancing of six feet or more;
- Avoiding large group gatherings;
- Washing your hands often with soap and water;
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- Staying home if you’re sick;
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

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