

Contra Costa Reaches 80% Vaccinated, Sunsets Vaccine Verification Requirement

With 80% of all county residents now fully vaccinated, Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) today lifted its health order requiring certain businesses, including restaurants and gyms, to verify the vaccination status or recent negative test results of customers.

CCHS continues to urge everyone 5 and older to get vaccinated for the best possible protection from COVID-19 – and especially to receive a booster dose when eligible, as growing local data show boosters provide substantially more protection.

Testing data show COVID-19 transmission, fueled by the highly contagious omicron variant, remains high in Contra Costa, but that the average daily number of new cases have likely peaked, and countywide hospitalizations due to COVID-19 have also begun to decline.

“We believe now is the right time to loosen a requirement that made a lot of sense last summer, when a different variant of COVID-19 was dominant and there was less community immunity,” said Dr. Ori Tzvieli, acting Contra Costa County health officer. “But by no means are we back to normal. There are still many more cases of COVID-19 in our community now than there were in mid-December, so we need to continue to take precautions when we go out.”

The best protection against COVID-19 infections, and serious illness from infections, is to be fully vaccinated and up to date with a booster dose whenever eligible.

“We deeply appreciate everyone who has chosen to vaccinate. You have made yourselves, your loved ones, and the entire community safer,” Contra Costa Health Director Anna Roth said. “If you are eligible and you have not gotten your booster, it is really important that you get one. People who get boosted are significantly safer from serious COVID-19.”

[County data show](#) that the daily COVID-19 case rate for Contra Costa residents who received booster doses is more than three times lower than that of unvaccinated people, and about nine times more effective at preventing hospitalization due to the virus.

On Thursday, Contra Costa reached a new milestone, with 80% of all county residents now fully vaccinated. So far, 48.4% of eligible residents have received booster doses.

The verification order, which took effect last September, applied to businesses where people remove face coverings to eat or drink indoors, such as restaurants, bars and entertainment venues, and to gyms and other indoor fitness facilities, including yoga and dance studios, where patrons breathe more heavily due to exercise.

The order required these businesses to verify that indoor customers were fully vaccinated, or had tested negative for COVID-19 within the past three days. It also included a requirement for workers in indoor areas of these businesses to show proof of full vaccination or test weekly.

Though the county requirement may be lifted, private businesses may choose to implement their own verification requirements to better protect customers and staff, and CCHS encourages them to consider doing so as a safest practice during the pandemic.

Other state and countywide health orders remain in effect, including workplace vaccine verification requirements for healthcare workers, first responders and congregate care workers, and a requirement for most people to wear face coverings in most indoor public spaces.

Current state health orders still require proof of vaccination or a recent, negative test result in certain situations, including when visiting hospitals or long-term care facilities, or attending indoor “mega events” of 500 or more people.

Visit cchealth.org/coronavirus for updates regarding Contra Costa County health orders and the county’s emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic.