



TULARE COUNTY
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

Timothy W. Lutz, MBA
Agency Director

Karen M. Elliott, MBA • Director • Public Health Branch Director
Karen Haught, MD, MPH • County Health Officer

March 1, 2022

Advisory: Changes to Universal Masking Mandate

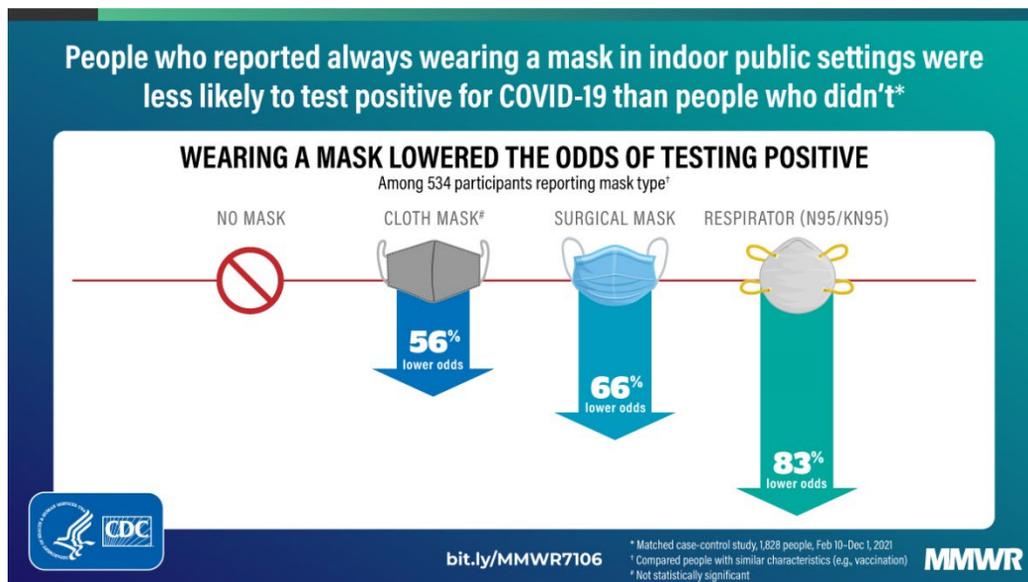
On February 28, 2022 California Department of Public Health (CDPH) announced updates for [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Masks](#). Effective March 1, 2022:

- Universal masking will remain required for all persons in healthcare, long-term care, adult & senior care, detentions, public transit, and emergency shelters;
- Universal masking will continue to be required for all persons age 2 years and older in schools and daycares through March 11, 2022 and continue to be strongly recommended thereafter;
- For other indoor public settings (e.g. businesses, restaurants, offices, etc.), masks will continue to be strongly recommended for all persons particularly when community transmission is high

While improving, rates of COVID-19 in the San Joaquin Valley remain high and area hospitals remain heavily impacted. Masks are a critical component in preventing transmission and their use indoors continues to be strongly advised for everyone regardless of vaccination status as our risk locally remains high. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) advises indoor masking when the community transmission level is high—this can be checked [here](#). At this time, Tulare County remains “high.”

Schools and daycares are strongly advised to continue universal indoor masking per CDPH and CDC guidance. Persons are also advised that additional masking requirements may still apply for the workplace as per [CalOSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards](#) and that masks otherwise remain indicated for all persons as per [CDPH Community Isolation and Quarantine guidance](#). Per CDPH guidance, businesses and facilities (including daycares and schools) may opt to require masks, especially when risk in the community may be high or those being served are at high-risk for severe disease or illness.

Data continues to show that masks are protective to those who wear them as well as an effective way to limit virus spread. Certain types of masks may provide more individual protection than others. Disposable surgical masks and respirators such as K-N95 or N-95 respirators are recommended as they provide more protection. If cloth face coverings are used, they should be at least 3 layers. It is very important that masks fit snugly against the face where both the nose and mouth stay covered.



Free N-95 masks were distributed across the country by the US Department of Health and Human Services. A limited supply is available at participating Walgreens and CVS pharmacies as well as Family Healthcare Network while supplies last. K-N95 and N-95 are otherwise available for purchase online as well as in stores and pharmacies.

Vaccination remains the best long-term tool in the fight against COVID-19 and is strongly recommended for everyone age 5 years and older. While data has shown that the vaccine remains effective against preventing hospitalization and death, boosters are strongly recommended to ensure ongoing protection against infection. All persons age 12 years and older should get their booster vaccine as soon as they are eligible: 5 months after the last Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine or 2 months after the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. COVID-19 vaccine can be given at the same time as other important vaccines this time of year, like the flu vaccine. Visit myturn.ca.gov or call 1-833-422-5255 for both COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine appointments and clinic locations.

Resources:

CDC, *Improve How Your Masks Protects You*: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>

CDPH, *Get the Most out of Masking*: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Get-the-Most-out-of-Masking.aspx>

CDC, *MMWR on Effectiveness of Face Mask or Respiratory Use in Indoor Public Settings for Prevention of SARS-CoV-2 Infection—California, February-December 2021*: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7106e1.htm>