

# SAN JUAN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

## PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY: COVID-19 MITIGATION

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March 9, 2022

### I. INTRODUCTION

As of March 9, 2022, The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) classifies the level of community transmission in San Juan County, Colorado as MEDIUM. The incidence of COVID-19 has been rapidly declining in San Juan County (SJC). While COVID-19 is still considered a pandemic, San Juan County Public Health (SJCPH) is providing guidance for this stage of the incident. New variants of COVID-19 may spread and cause the need to implement prevention strategies. This advisory is being issued based on updated State and Federal guidance as of March 3, 2022. This advisory replaces all previously issued COVID-19 related advisories.

Layered prevention strategies including vaccination, wearing face coverings, physical distancing, holding social gatherings and conducting business outdoors instead of indoors, maximizing indoor ventilation, symptom screening, and hand hygiene are key to reducing the transmission of COVID-19. COVID-19 remains a mandatory reportable condition under Colorado communicable disease regulations.

### II. COMMUNITY MITIGATION MEASURES

SJCPH urges all individuals in SJC to follow community mitigation measures if the level of COVID-19 transmission increases to HIGH on the CDC COVID-19 Community Level [website](#) which is more than 200 per 100,000 people in the past 7 days. SJCPH will evaluate the need for implementing measures and use departmental data if information has not been updated on the CDC website.

In the event of increased community transmission, the following measures may be implemented:

- Symptom screening. [Details linked here.](#)
- Use a KN-95 style mask in indoor spaces when SJC is listed as “Medium” risk or “High” risk by the CDC’s “COVID-19 community levels”. [Details here.](#)
- Use hand sanitizer
- Encourage physical distancing
- Encourage outdoor gatherings
- Provide an option for work at home and remote meetings.
- Self testing is now readily available and can be used as a screening tool. Tests are available for free at locations around Silverton. Call 970-387-0242.
- Additional precautions may be needed for people at high risk for severe illness. [Details linked here.](#)

SJCPH advises the public that individuals who meet the CDC’s definition of a close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case while not up-to-date on their COVID-19 vaccinations may be subject to quarantine requirements, in accordance with CDC exposure definitions and quarantine recommendations found at [this link](#).

### **III. VACCINATION AND THERAPEUTICS**

SJCPH urges all eligible persons to get vaccinated against the COVID-19 disease. *Vaccination is the best defense against the disease.* [Detailed vaccine guidance linked here from the CDPHE.](#)

Safe and highly effective vaccines against COVID-19 are readily accessible in SJC for those 5 years of age and older. SJCPH urges eligible unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated as soon as possible and urges partially vaccinated people to complete their vaccination series to maximize their level of protection.

Booster vaccines are authorized and recommended for all persons who have completed their primary vaccine series and are over the age of twelve (Pfizer series) or eighteen (Moderna series or Johnson & Johnson). Evidence strongly suggests that booster shots provide significantly increased protection against the Omicron variant, which is dominant in Colorado. SJCPH urges eligible unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated as soon as possible, urges partially vaccinated people to complete their vaccination series, and urges eligible patients to receive a booster shot to maximize their level of protection.

SJCPH strongly urges parents of an eligible child to fully vaccinate their child as soon as possible and to vaccinate their child with a booster shot when eligible. More information about boosters is available at [this link](#).

SJCPH further advises that, because vaccination and booster shots continue to be effective at limiting severe illness and spread of infection and associated days of missed in-person work, employers should consider requiring all employees to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or to test weekly if unvaccinated.

Limited supplies of monoclonal antibody and antiviral treatments are now available in Southwest Colorado. These treatments can help prevent severe illness for some people aged 12 years and older who get infected with COVID-19, have mild or moderate symptoms, and are at high risk of developing severe COVID-19 due to age or medical condition. People who meet these criteria should consult their physician and develop a plan for if they are exposed and/or test positive.

### **IV. BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS, PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

SJCPH advises that business organizations, public institutions and special events should consider requiring employees, customers and/or guests to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, or to require a recent (less than 48 hours) negative test to be presented on entry. Widespread vaccination, combined with other mitigation strategies, continues to be the best approach to reduce the burden of disease in our community.

Employers are reminded that all employers in the state, regardless of size, are required to provide a supplement of up to 80 hours of COVID-related leave in 2022, including paid sick leave for getting the COVID-19 vaccine and recovering from side effects that prevent an employee from working, while a declared state public health emergency remains in effect. More information on this requirement is available at [this link](#).

### **V. FACE COVERING**

Evidence continues to suggest that consistently wearing a well-fitting, high-quality face covering, like a surgical mask or, especially, a KN95 or N95 respirator, is associated with

lower likelihood of spreading or acquiring a COVID-19 infection. SJCPH urges vulnerable individuals and people who live with vulnerable individuals in SJC to wear a well-fitting, high-quality face covering while in a Public Indoor Space, unless the individual is two years of age or younger, or cannot medically tolerate a face covering, when the county they are in is listed as “Medium” risk or “High” risk by the CDC’s “COVID-19 community levels”, found at [CDC site](#).

SJCPH continues to recommend that people with symptoms, people with a positive test who are out of their initial isolation period, and people with a confirmed exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a well-fitting, high-quality mask in Public Indoor Spaces. Information on masks and their proper use can be found at [this link](#).

All individuals in San Juan County are reminded that at all “community levels,” people can wear a mask based on personal preference, informed by personal risk assessment and risk tolerance. A well-fitted KN95 or N95 respirator is the best additional protection for individuals who desire to maximize their level of protection while in a Public Indoor Space. High quality masks are available free of charge at SJCPHs offices, the Fire Department, the Silverton Public Library and the Visitors Center.

## **VI. SCHOOLS AND CHILDCARE**

Schools, childcare facilities, and extracurricular activities should exclude ill children, improve ventilation of indoor spaces, conduct operations outdoors, and emphasize hand hygiene to the extent possible, and should consider implementing screening testing strategies when their county is listed as “Medium” risk or “High” risk by the CDC’s “COVID-19 community levels,” found at [this link](#).

SJCPH further advises P-12 schools, childcare facilities (regardless of licensure status), and extracurricular activities to require face coverings for all persons in indoor school, childcare, and activity settings when the facility’s county is listed as “High” risk by the CDC’s “COVID-19 community levels”, in alignment with CDC guidance.

Schools, childcare facilities, and extracurricular activities are reminded that case and outbreak investigation may lead to further SJCPH recommendations in response to individual situations.

***SJCPH will continue to evaluate the prevalence and risks of COVID-19 in San Juan County and adjust this Advisory and, if necessary, issue Public Health Orders accordingly.***