

Seniors, People Living in High Poverty Areas Remain Disproportionately Impacted by COVID-19

The most recent data* on COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths in Los Angeles County show there's an undeniable need for the community to continue collective efforts to protect seniors and people living in areas of high poverty as they suffer worse outcomes than other county residents.

Public Health's most recent 90-day data found the following among seniors:

- People 80 and older were nearly **3x** more likely to be hospitalized than people 65 to 79.
- People 80 and older were more than **5x** as likely to die than people 65 to 79.
- People 65 to 79 were more than **3x** as likely to be hospitalized than people 50 to 64.
- People 65 to 79 were more than **5x** as likely to die than people 50 to 64.

Hospitalization and death rates are **nearly double** for people living in the county's poorest neighborhoods compared to those residing in the wealthiest neighborhoods.

Everyone can do their part to protect those more vulnerable to illness by following these simple steps:

- Wearing a high-quality, well-fitting mask in public indoor spaces.
- At-home tests help you make sure you aren't passing anything along unintentionally. Testing is a good tool before gatherings, after an exposure, or when you have symptoms.
- If you are sick, please stay home, recover, and take good care of yourself.
- Stay up to date on your vaccines, including the bivalent COVID-19 booster and this year's seasonal flu shot.

Furthermore, seniors and residents who can't easily leave their home may [contact Public Health Telehealth services at \(833\) 540-0473](tel:(833)540-0473), seven days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. to arrange for at-home COVID-19 bivalent booster and primary series vaccinations or transportation to a vaccination center.

*Data from a 90-day period ending Jan. 3, 2023.

Most COVID-19 metrics, except for the sobering rise in deaths, are better than anticipated at this point in the post-holiday season and when compared to past winters. The absence of a post winter holiday spike in cases and hospitalizations may reflect the new tools available to blunt the impact of COVID, and the preventative health measures taken by residents and workers.

Los Angeles County remains in the Medium Community level, with a case rate of 122 new cases per 100,000 people and a hospital admission rate of 11.9 per 100,000 people.

Yet despite these promising trendlines, some individuals are at significantly greater risk for serious outcomes should they become infected.

Hospitalization rates for people 80 and older are nearly three times higher than for people 65- to 79-years-old in Los Angeles County, according to the most recent 90-day data. And the death rate for that same age group is nearly five times higher when compared to people ages 65 to 79.

In addition, when compared to people ages 50 to 64, residents who are 65- to 79-years-old have hospitalization rates that are more than three times higher, and the number of deaths per 100,000 people is more than five times higher.

Residents who live in communities with high rates of poverty also are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Many are part of our essential workforce who, by the very nature of their jobs, are in close contact with other workers and customers, increasing their exposure to COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses, particularly during times of high community transmission.

Hospitalization and death rates are nearly double for people living in the county's poorest neighborhoods, where more than 30 percent of households live in poverty, compared to those residing in the wealthiest neighborhoods, according to data for the 90-day period ending Jan. 3.

To help minimize the impact of COVID-19, especially on the most vulnerable family, friends and community members, here are a few other simple steps everyone can take to protect themselves, the people they love and their community:

Vaccinations and Boosters: Being up to date on vaccinations and boosters is essential. The updated bivalent booster is readily available at Public Health sites, pharmacies, and other locations across the county. Seniors and residents who can't easily leave their home may contact Public Health telehealth services at (833) 540-0473, seven days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. to arrange for at-home COVID-19 bivalent booster and primary series vaccinations or transportation to a vaccination center. Residents also may go to [VaccinateLACounty.com](https://www.vaccinatelacounty.com) or [VacunateLosAngeles.com](https://www.vacunatelosangeles.com) (en español).

Masking: Wear a high-quality, well-fitting mask (such as N95s, KN95s, and KN94s) in public indoor spaces. Mask for 10 days after engaging in high-risk activities, such as traveling, attending large gatherings, or being exposed to a confirmed case. Ten days is the average incubation period of COVID-19 when the virus can spread before a person has symptom.

Testing: Testing at home is critical before gatherings, after a known exposure to the virus, or if experiencing symptoms. For more information go to ph.lacounty.gov/COVIDtests. Each household can receive four free tests from the federal government by visiting COVIDtests.gov.

Treatment: If you have possible symptoms of COVID-19 or flu, speak to a health care provider to see if you are eligible for a therapeutics prescription. To be effective, Paxlovid for COVID should be started within five days of symptom onset and Tamiflu, to treat influenza or flu, should be started withing two days of first symptoms.

Providers are available to answer questions about symptoms, give advice, and prescribe medications if appropriate, which can be shipped to a resident's home, via telehealth services. This service is available seven days a week, from 8 am to 8:30 pm, by calling the Public Health Call Center at 1-833-540-0473. For additional COVID treatment options, visit a local test to treat site. Locations can be found at ph.lacounty.gov/covidmedicines