

**ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF MERCED
PROVIDING A PUBLIC HEALTH ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE ORDER**



**HEALTH OFFICER ORDER FOR THE CONTROL OF COVID-19
Public Health Isolation and Quarantine Order
Order No. 2021-001**

Date of Order: March 11, 2021

UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, 120175, 120215, 120220, AND 120225, THE HEALTH OFFICER OF THE COUNTY OF MERCED (“HEALTH OFFICER”) ORDERS: This Order is in effect until rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Health Officer.

INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE REQUIRED TO FOLLOW THIS HEALTH OFFICER ORDER

All individuals who reside in Merced County who receive a COVID-19 diagnosis are required to isolate themselves and follow all instructions of this Order, including the accompanying **COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE INSTRUCTIONS**. A person is considered to be diagnosed with or likely to have COVID-19 based on one or all of the following criteria:

- a) The person received a positive diagnostic (viral) test for COVID-19, and/or
- b) A healthcare provider clinically suspects the person has COVID-19.

All individuals who reside in Merced County who have been in close contact with a person who was diagnosed with COVID-19 while they were infectious are required to quarantine themselves and follow all instructions in this Order, including the accompanying **COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE INSTRUCTIONS**, except for individuals who have been fully vaccinated as described by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html> **and** have no COVID-19 symptoms listed by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

WHAT YOU ARE REQUIRED TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Health Officer hereby requires you to immediately:

- a) Self-isolate, and
- b) Inform your close contacts to self-quarantine if you have a positive diagnostic (viral) test for COVID-19, and
- c) Follow the INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELF-ISOLATION in this Order.

WHAT YOU ARE REQUIRED TO DO IF YOU HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH A PERSON WHO HAS COVID-19, AND HAVE NOT BEEN FULLY VACCINATED

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Health Officer hereby requires you to immediately:

- a) Self-quarantine, and
- b) Self-isolate if you become ill with fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or other COVID-19 symptoms listed by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> and
- c) Follow the INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELF-QUARANTINE in this Order.

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PURPOSE OF THE ORDER

The purpose of this Order is to help slow the spread of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), to protect individuals at higher risk, and to protect the health care system from a surge of cases into its emergency rooms and hospitals. California is in a State of Emergency because of the COVID-19 pandemic and COVID-19 is a substantial danger to the health of the public within the County of Merced. The virus can easily spread between people who are in close contact with one another. Everyone is at risk for becoming ill, but some people are at higher risk for serious illness (including pneumonia or organ failure) or death due to their age, physical condition, and/or health status.

This Order is based upon scientific evidence and best practices, as currently known and available. Isolation and quarantine are recommended by the CDC and other public health experts as a proven strategy for preventing transmission of COVID-19.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS

The Health Officer may take additional action(s), which may include civil detention or requiring one to stay at a health facility or other location, to protect the public's health if an individual who is subject to this Order violates or fails to comply with this Order. Violation of the Order is also a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment, fine, or both.

In accordance with California Health and Safety Code Section 131080, the Health Officer will follow the guidance of the California Department of Public Health and may modify or extend this Order, or issue additional Orders.

This Order shall become effective immediately.

Copies of this Order shall promptly be: (1) made available at the County Administrative Building at 2222 M Street, Merced, California, 95340; (2) posted on the Merced County Public Health Department's website (countyofmerced.com); and (3) provided to any member of the public requesting a copy of this Order.

If any provision of this Order to the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and effect. To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.

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YOUR RIGHTS

1. If you object to this Public Health Universal Isolation and Quarantine Order, you have a right to arrange for your own legal representative.
2. You have a right to also file a Writ of Habeas Corpus under California Penal Code Section 1473 to seek release from the Order.
3. You have a right to request release from isolation or quarantine by contacting the Merced County Department of Public Health at (209) 381-1180 during normal business hours Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-5:00 pm.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ORDER

If you have questions regarding this Order, call the Merced County Department of Public Health at (209) 381-1180.

IT IS SO ORDERED:



Salvador Sandoval, MD, MPH
Merced County Health Officer

Dated: March 11, 2021

Last Updated: February 5, 2021

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELF-ISOLATION: If you have been **diagnosed with COVID-19**, you are required to follow these instructions:

1. Self-isolate until you are no longer at risk for spreading COVID-19.

You must isolate yourself (stay in your home or another place of residence) until you are no longer at risk for spreading COVID-19. Until this time, you may not leave your place of isolation, or enter any public or other private place, except to receive necessary medical care. Wear a face covering at all times when indoors around others.

You are required to self-isolate because you have been infected with COVID-19, and can easily spread COVID-19 to others, including people who are at higher risk for serious illness, such as older adults and people with [underlying medical conditions](#).

An infected person is anyone who has a positive COVID-19 test, either PCR or antigen, or has been told by a healthcare provider they likely have COVID-19. Infected persons are considered to be infectious from 2 days before their symptoms first appeared until the time they are no longer required to be isolated. A person with a positive COVID-19 diagnostic (viral) test, but no symptoms, is considered to be infectious 2 days before their first positive test was taken until 10 days after that test was taken.

If you have a positive COVID-19 test, and have not done so already, consider contacting your healthcare provider, clinician advice line, or telemedicine provider for a medical assessment. If you are an older adult and/or have [medical conditions](#) that may put you at higher risk for becoming seriously ill, it is important to let your healthcare provider know early if you have new or worsening symptoms.

Seek urgent or emergency medical care immediately if you have trouble breathing, pressure or pain in your chest, or any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Duration of Self-isolation: You are required to self-isolate separately from others (if possible) for **10 days from the date of your COVID-19 positive test if asymptomatic. If you have symptoms or if symptoms develop during the isolation period, continue isolation for 10 days from onset of symptoms AND until improvement of symptoms and fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications** (including cough medications), unless you require further medical attention. You must stay in isolation for this entire period because during this time, you could spread COVID-19, even if you don't have any symptoms or if you only have mild symptoms.

2. Tell your close contacts to self-quarantine if you have a positive COVID-19 test.

If you have a positive diagnostic (viral) test result, you must notify all of our close contacts, as defined below, that they are required to quarantine (stay in their home or another residence). This is because they have been exposed to COVID-19 and, if infected, can easily spread it to others, even if they have no symptoms. While self-quarantined, your contacts may not leave their place of quarantine, or enter any public or other private place, except to receive necessary medical care. Exceptions may be made for essential workers, which must be approved by the Merced County Public Health Department.

A "close contact" is defined as, for purposes of Merced County Health Officer Orders:

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- a) An individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person(s) for at least 15 minutes, whether during a single exposure or many exposures that add up to 15 minutes over a 24-hour period.
 - b) An individual who had unprotected contact with an infected person's body fluids and/or secretions, for example being coughed or sneezed on, sharing utensils or saliva, or providing care without using appropriate protective equipment.

An infected person is anyone with COVID-19 or who, because of their symptoms, is suspected to have COVID-19. Infected persons are considered to be infectious from 2 days before their symptoms first appeared until the time they are no longer required to be isolated. A person with a positive COVID-19 diagnostic (viral) test, but no symptoms, is considered to be infectious 2 days before their first positive test was taken until 10 days after that test was taken.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELF-QUARANTINE: If you have been **in close contact with a person who has or is likely to have COVID-19**, you are required to follow these instructions:

1. Self-quarantine until you are not at risk for spreading COVID-19.

You must quarantine yourself (stay in your home or another place of residence) until you are no longer at risk for spreading COVID-19. Until this time, you may not leave your place of quarantine, or enter any public or other private place, except to receive necessary medical care. However, if you are a healthcare worker or first responder who does not have symptoms (asymptomatic), you can follow the return-to-work protocols required by your employer. Exceptions may be made for essential workers, which must be approved by the Merced County Public Health Department. Wear a face covering at all times when indoors around others.

You are required to self-quarantine because it is likely you have been exposed to COVID-19. If you are an infected person, you can easily spread COVID-19 to others, including people who are at higher risk for serious illness, such as older adults and people with [underlying medical conditions](#).

Duration of Self-quarantine: You are required to self-quarantine separately from others (if possible) for **10 days after your last contact** with the person who has or is likely to have COVID-19, or **10 days after a COVID-19 patient living in your home has recovered if the patient is not able to isolate themselves from you**. You must stay in quarantine for this entire 10-day period, regardless of whether you have tested negative for COVID-19 during the quarantine period, because this is how long it can take for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to develop (incubation period). During this time, you could spread COVID-19, even if you don't have any symptoms or if you only have mild symptoms.

2. If you become sick, self-isolate until you're not at risk for spreading COVID-19.

If you become sick with fever, cough, or shortness of breath, you must isolate yourself at home and away from other people, and follow the INSTRUCTIONS FOR SELF-ISOLATION within this Order. These actions are required because due to your symptoms, it's likely that you have COVID-19 and could spread the virus to others. You may cease to self-isolate if you recover before ten days if you have a negative COVID-19 test and an alternative diagnosis (e.g., flu) from a medical provider.

If you do develop fever, cough, shortness of breath, or any other [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#), you should contact your healthcare provider, clinician advice line, or telemedicine provider for a medical

assessment and also get tested for COVID-19. If you are an older adult and/or have [medical conditions](#) that may put you at higher risk for becoming seriously ill, it is important to let your healthcare provider know early if you have new or worsening symptoms.

Seek urgent or emergency medical care immediately if you have trouble breathing, pressure or pain in your chest, or any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

PROTECT YOUR HOUSEHOLD

To protect your family or household members from the spread of COVID-19, isolate or quarantine yourself from others as much as possible. If available, you should use a separate bedroom and bathroom. Wear a face covering at all times while around others. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol frequently to prevent spreading the virus to your healthy household members. Your household members should clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, and take extra precautions while doing laundry, washing dishes, or taking out trash. For more information on how to properly clean and disinfect your home when someone is sick, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>.