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Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

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Riverside County officials: It's up to all of us to return to red. Get tested.

Riverside County officials remind residents that returning swiftly to the red tier of the state's reopening framework is based on the actions that all of us take – including getting tested.

Returning to red tier so that more businesses can return indoors as quickly as possible means that all residents must remain vigilant and get tested. Getting tested is a critical step to early intervention that slows the spread to others.

When residents wear face masks outside the home, keep six feet of distance from others and frequently wash their hands, they protect themselves by up to 95 percent of the virus.

"We have been through this situation before and we have the tools to get back into the red tier," said Board Chair V. Manuel Perez, Fourth District Supervisor. "Let's all work together, focus on getting tested and wearing face masks, so we can get back to red."

Riverside County returned to the purple tier this week, requiring several types of businesses and places of worship to move outdoors. The county must remain in the purple tier for a minimum of three weeks until the state-evaluated metrics return to the red tier for two of those weeks.

PCR swab tests for active infections slows the spread of the disease by identifying infected individuals who can then be isolated as well as their close contacts. This process disrupts the virus and slows its spread.

“Besides the benefit to our businesses, there’s a payoff for you,” said Dr. Cameron Kaiser, Riverside County public health officer. “If you’re medically vulnerable, detecting the infection early might reduce your risk of complications, and even if you’re well, it means you can take precautions sooner to avoid spreading it to your family or workplace. If we can get less spread, fewer people will be at risk, and that’s the most important goal.”

Riverside County’s state-evaluated metrics include a 5.2 positivity rate and 9.1 case rate. While the positivity rate is within the red tier range, the case rate – cases per 100,000 people – is within the purple tier. Riverside County’s case rate is also worsened by the state’s upwards adjustment for not reaching the statewide median of PCR swab tests. More Riverside County residents this week are getting tested for the virus at approximately 200 people a day per 100,000 residents, up from 139 in early September. The statewide testing median is 239 people a day per 100,000 residents.

Based on the state’s criteria, if Riverside County tests a higher rate than the statewide median, the case rate will be adjusted down, instead of up.

Testing is free at a county or state-run site and available for anyone.

There are also mobile teams that support testing in specific communities, businesses or organizations by testing for one or two days.

There are 12 testing sites spread throughout Riverside County, both walk-in and drive-up services. To find county and state-run locations and make an appointment, go online to gettested.ruhealth.org. For a list of other COVID-19 test sites in your area, click <https://covid19.ca.gov/get-tested/>.

Follow official sources for information, including Riverside University Health System-Public Health on Facebook and @RivCoDoc on Twitter.

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