



# County of Fresno

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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### NEWS RELEASE

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## Fresno County Expands Testing for Safe Back-to-School

The Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) is working with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Fresno County Superintendent of Schools (FCSS) to ensure that all students are protected from COVID-19 and its variants as they return to school. The FCDPH and the FCSS have expanded access to COVID-19 testing for students and are providing in-home rapid tests for every K-12 public school student. More than 160,000 kits are expected to be distributed over the next two weeks throughout Fresno County. Parents and students are encouraged to contact their school district for more information.

“Students belong in the classroom in front of a caring adult,” says Jim Yovino, Fresno County Superintendent of Schools. “Let’s keep students in school. I encourage families to utilize the test kits available to them from their school district, as well as vaccinating their children when eligible.”

Many symptoms of COVID-19 resemble those of a cold, flu, and allergies. Anyone experiencing congestion or a runny nose, the sniffles, sore throat, fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea should be tested for COVID-19 and stay home from work or school.

As of January 3, 2022, Fresno County has increased to twenty Omicron cases. “More cases of Omicron are expected over the next few days as travelers return home and as students return to the classroom,” says Dr. Rais Vohra, Interim Health Officer. “Evidence suggests that Omicron spreads more rapidly than other variants, and an increase in cases may continue to overwhelm our Central Valley hospitals.”

For those who do not yet have a home test available, walk-up or drive-thru COVID-19 testing sites, and events will continue into the new year. The full schedule of testing events and sites available throughout Fresno County can be found on the FCDPH website: [www.fcdph.org/covid19testing](http://www.fcdph.org/covid19testing).

The FCDPH is reminding residents that masking remains in effect and is required by the CDPH for all individuals in all indoor public settings, regardless of vaccination status through January 15, 2022 (surgical masks or higher-level respirators are recommended, as they provide better protection than cloth face coverings).

COVID-19 vaccines continue to be safe and highly effective at protecting individuals from hospitalization and death. All children 5 years and older can now receive the COVID-19 vaccine, which remains free of

#### ***Promotion, preservation and protection of the community's health***

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charge for all county residents. It is also important to get your booster dose if you are eligible. Vaccination sites and events are available on our website: [www.fcdph.org/covid19vax](http://www.fcdph.org/covid19vax).

The FCDPH continues to work with the FCSS and the Department of Behavioral Health to protect the health and wellbeing of students while they are on campus, and the valuable role that in-person learning plays for children's social and emotional development. For more information visit [www.fcdph.org/safeschools](http://www.fcdph.org/safeschools).

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