



Public Health Division

County of Santa Cruz

HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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Press Release

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Public Health Officials Confirm New Case of COVID-19 in Santa Cruz County

SANTA CRUZ –The County of Santa Cruz Public Health Division is announcing its first case of COVID-19.

On Friday evening, March 6, 2020, test results confirmed a COVID-19 diagnosis for a resident who previously traveled on the Grand Princess cruise ship from San Francisco to Mexico February 11-21. This case was not acquired through community spread.

Santa Cruz County Public Health is conducting a thorough investigation to identify any potential exposures that may have occurred. Due to medical privacy issues, the County is not disclosing identifying information regarding this individual.

"We are taking this situation seriously and are taking steps necessary to protect the health and safety of Santa Cruz County residents," said Dr. Gail Newel, County of Santa Cruz Health Officer.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) previously alerted counties of an exposure risk due to several travelers returning from the Grand Princess cruise ship, including travelers residing in Santa Cruz County. All are being actively monitored and are under self-quarantine, with daily contact with public health officials. Testing is requested for those exhibiting symptoms.

While COVID-19 represents a serious public health threat, the risk to Santa Cruz County residents remains low. However, as the outbreak continues to spread, Santa Cruz County Public Health anticipate there will be additional reported local cases.

On March 4, Dr. Newel declared a local health emergency, and the County activated its Emergency Operation Center (EOC) to bolster response efforts. Santa Cruz County Public Health is investigating potential exposures; collaborating with local, state and federal agencies to implement containment efforts; and providing notifications to the public and community agencies as the situation evolves.

"Any new virus brings a great deal community concern. We are prepared for all situations that may arise," Dr. Newel said. "We want to remind individuals that this virus does not discriminate, and people should not be excluded from activities based on their race or country of origin."



Public Health
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Santa Cruz County

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to the flu, which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or up to 14 days after exposure.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and may have had contact with a person with COVID-19 or had recent travel to countries with COVID-19 outbreaks, contact your primary care physician's office. Before seeking medical attention, call first to prevent possible transmission in the health care setting.

Santa Cruz County Public Health strongly urges community members to take precautions to help prevent the spread of illness:

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rubbing for at least 20 seconds, or using alcohol-based sanitizer if soap and water are not available;
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing;
- Don't touch your face;
- Regularly clean surfaces touched by many people;
- Stay home if you are sick; and
- Get a flu shot to protect yourself and others from flu, which has similar symptoms to COVID-19.

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, and the information contained in this press release may change quickly. CDC will provide updated information as it becomes available. For the latest updates, go to the CDC 2019 novel coronavirus website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>.

For local information, residents may visit www.santacruzhealth.org/coronavirus, call 211 or text "coronavirus" to 211211. Messaging rates may apply.

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