San Francisco Department of Public Health

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PRESS RELEASE

GET YOUR BOOSTER NOW: AS OMICRON VARIANT RAPIDLY SPREADS, SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH SUPPORTS DROP IN SITES FOR BOOSTERS AND TESTS, RECOMMENDS BETTER MASKS

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Drop in sites for vaccines, boosters and testing are available at select locations in the City over the next several weeks to support easy access to these essential services during the holiday surge.

San Francisco – With COVID-19 cases surging in the City due to the spread of the highly-contagious Omicron variant, the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) is making access to vaccine boosters and testing easily available at drop-in clinics and is urging extra caution during holiday gatherings.

Every person counts when it comes to boosters right now, as the primary dose vaccination series is not enough to prevent the spread of infection, severe illness, or hospitalization. San Francisco's case rate has tripled from 91 cases to more than 273 cases in the 7 days ending on December 20, a clear indication that we have entered the fifth surge in the pandemic. Cases are rising three times faster than during the summer Delta-fueled surge. Further rapid increases are expected. The benefits of a booster dose begin to rise in just a few days and reach maximum effectiveness in a week.

"Omicron is rapidly spreading, and all evidence points to the fact that we need to do more to protect ourselves and others from infection," said Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Health. "Boosters are key right now for your own protection and those you love. We also want people to celebrate the holidays more safely and with an extra dose of caution, and that includes layering our defenses and taking extra caution around those who are at higher risk, including people who are elderly, immunocompromised, or unvaccinated like small children."

To increase access, SFDPH has identified a number of vaccination sites open for drop-ins for booster doses across the City (see below), while appointments are also available across our health system sites. Additionally, SFDPH is making drop-in testing available at over 20 sites, and our sites are expanding testing to administer 20,000 tests per week to support the City's high demand for tests right now.

As people travel and gather for the holidays, they should layer their defense against the Omicron variant through vaccines, boosters, testing, and [wearing an N95 or well fitted "double" mask](#) (cloth on top of surgical/disposable mask) to improve the seal of the mask to the face. A well-fitted mask that can be comfortably worn is most important. Limiting the size and number of indoor gatherings also reduces risk.

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San Francisco detected the first case of Omicron in the United States on December 1. A recent analysis from a sample of positive COVID-19 tests shows 77% of the positive test results are likely Omicron, indicating how quickly the new variant is replacing the Delta variant in the population. While Omicron may on average cause less serious illness than Delta, transmission is so much higher that San Francisco is likely to see high rates of hospitalizations in the coming weeks.

As of December 22, 53% of eligible San Francisco residents have received a booster, and more than 70% of residents 65 and older who are at higher risk of serious disease. Our current modeling shows how imperative it is to boost as many San Franciscans as possible and as quickly as possible in order to decrease the load on hospitals and to preserve capacity to serve people with COVID and other health situations not related to COVID. SFDPH also launched a new data page today for the public to track the City's booster efforts.

Where to get a vaccine or booster:
Here are the following locations in San Francisco where people can drop-in to receive a booster, Monday to Friday while supplies last each day. Please check sf.gov/getvaccinated or call 628-652-2700 for the latest changes in holiday hours.
- ZSFG (1001 Potrero Ave, Bldg 30)
- Southeast Health Center (2401 Keith Street)
- Chinese Hospital (845 Jackson Street) (closed Dec. 24)
- Kaiser Tent (2350 Geary Blvd) (closed Dec. 24)

Where to get a test:
People should go to their health care provider first, if they have one. If you are in need, SFDPH has over 20 sites that offer a drop-in option to receive a test. The full list of testing sites in SF can be found at: sf.gov/gettested.
- Alemany Market, 100 Alemany Blvd
- SFDPH neighborhood sites

How to celebrate safer this holiday season:
- Have everyone ages 5+ get their COVID-19 vaccine and booster if eligible.
- Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 should isolate themselves and get tested as soon as possible.
- Get tested before travel, upon return, and again 3-5 days later.
- Take advantage of quick and easy home test kits available in pharmacies and stores.
- Outside gatherings are safer than indoor gatherings. Limit number and size of indoor gatherings.
- Take all precautions, including vaccinations, boosters and testing when gathering with others without masks – especially with elderly or immunocompromised individuals, and anyone who is unvaccinated or not yet boosted.

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- Wear a well-fitted mask indoors and in crowded settings. Wear and N95 or double mask with surgical and cloth to improve the seal.
- Unvaccinated adults should avoid travel and gatherings outside their household.

What to do if you test positive for COVID:
Individuals who test positive, including if they are asymptomatic, should assume they are infected with COVID-19 and take measures to get care and isolate away from others. They should additionally notify their healthcare provider about their positive test result and stay in contact with them during their illness. Individuals who do not have a provider or need assistance with isolation, can connect with our COVID Resource Center at (628) 217-6101.
More information about what to do if you test positive can be found here.

More San Francisco booster data can be found here: https://sf.gov/data/covid-19-vaccine-boosters.

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