



County of San Diego

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EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR URGES ENHANCED PROTECTIVE MEASURES DURING RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURGE

San Diego County [surveillance data](#) indicate we are experiencing a surge in respiratory viruses. Resultant staffing shortages negatively contribute to an already busy healthcare system. To help mitigate disease spread, hospitals within San Diego County are increasingly implementing various types of masking requirements in patient care areas. Please be aware of, and comply with, these rapidly evolving hospital policies as you deliver patients to emergency departments.

Masking has been shown to decrease transmission of viruses. Please mask patients for source control, as appropriate. In addition, masking by EMS professionals is encouraged to reduce unattended transmission of virus to vulnerable patients.

As with previous surges, EMS professionals are strongly encouraged to be up-to-date on influenza and COVID vaccinations. Additionally, please adhere to non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) by remembering the **3Ws**:

- **W**ash your hands (for at least 2 minutes)
- In crowded or poorly ventilated settings:
 - **W**ear your mask/respirator (N95 or equivalent)
 - **W**alk away (maintain at least 6 feet from others when feasible)

Other protective measures during a respiratory virus surge include:

- implementation of [best practices](#) in fire stations or other indoor workplaces; and
- staying home when you are sick – even when symptoms are mild.

Thank you for your continued actions to decrease spread of influenza, COVID, RSV, and other respiratory viruses. These actions contribute to preservation of our emergency healthcare system.

Respectfully,

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director
San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office
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cc: Eric McDonald, MD, MPH, FACEP, Interim Agency Director and Chief Medical Officer
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