

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ventura County Public Health Press Release**

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March 20, 2020

**Stay Well At Home: In effect Friday, March 20, 11:59 pm**  
***Public Health Officer Issues local Order to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19***

To further combat the spread of COVID-19, Ventura County Public Health Officer Doctor Robert Levin, has issued a “Stay Well at Home” emergency order – ordering all residents of the County of Ventura to stay inside their residences, and immediately limit all movement outside of their homes beyond what is absolutely necessary to take care of essential needs. The order is effective March 20, 2020, at 11:59 pm through April 20, 2020, 11:59 pm. The Order was prepared and signed before the Governor of California issued a state “Stay at Home Order”. We have since modified our Order.

Community members are encouraged to learn more about the Order and read frequently asked questions at the following website: [www.vcemergency.com/staywellvc](http://www.vcemergency.com/staywellvc).

“I think it’s very important to have our own Order issued here in Ventura County. Our Order speaks to the communities we serve and provides more details for our region. We could see a doubling of the number of cases in our county every week. Places that are not responding aggressively are seeing a tenfold increase in weekly cases. Our response in our County is an aggressive one. We are going to ask you to stay inside for your health and the County’s health. We believe, and experience tells us, that this will result in a lower peak in the number of cases in our County,” said Ventura County Public Health Officer Doctor Robert Levin.

“We are at a pivotal moment in this public health threat. We are on the verge of seeing the number of COVID cases spiking, we have to take powerful, decisive actions in order to defeat this threat and save lives,” said County of Ventura CEO, Mike Powers. “In listening to our Public Health Leadership, we believe it is essential for us to act swiftly to prevent the spike in cases we have seen in other countries. We felt it was important to tailor the Order to our local community.”

The Order attempts to strike the right balance. While prioritizing the health of the community, it also recognizes the importance of essential services such as health care, safety, social services, education, food services, grocery stores, agriculture, community organizations, the press, construction, hotels and motels and business that support these essential businesses, banks and plumbers and sanitation workers and restaurants which provided take out and delivered meals.

During this time various businesses will still be open. You will still be able to go to grocery stores. You will still be able to go to your local coffee shop to take your coffee to go, there will be no gathering at coffee shops. You will still be able to go to farmers markets where you will find that they have implemented social distancing. You will also be able to go to restaurants, wine shops and breweries where you can pick up items to go.

You will be able to leave your home to exercise. This includes running, walking, biking and hiking by yourself or with members of your household. You will be able to go to and from your doctor’s office. You will be able to work and garden around the house and leave the house to pick up products for your pets. Essential businesses will remain open. Those businesses will be asked to have their employees work from home as much as possible. Working from home distances a

person from others and creates more space for social distancing at the workplace. Workplaces will be maintaining 6 feet between employees and will encourage frequent hand washing. Discourage shaking hands. All aspects of agricultural production will remain open as well. If you are sick do not go to work in those essential jobs. If you encounter someone when running an errand to the grocery store or other location maintain a six-foot distance from that person especially distance yourself from those that appear to be ill.

“Our top priority is, protecting the health of our community, especially the most vulnerable - seniors and those with compromised immune systems. But we also owe it to protect our brave and compassionate health care workers, our first responders, fire, sheriff, as well as our social workers and public health nurses who are out in the community caring for some of the most vulnerable members of our community,” said Powers.

“We know this will have devastating impacts for many individuals and businesses in our County. We must all – local state, federal governments, community organizations – come together to support those businesses and employees impacted. Unemployment payments, paid leave, small business loans. Our recovery efforts must start now,” said Powers.

“Our County has faced so much, and here is one more challenge. But what makes us special is the strength and compassion of our community, how deeply we care about each other. Because of that resilience and spirit of community, I know Ventura County will get through this and emerge stronger than ever,” he added.

Residents of the County of Ventura are required to stay inside their homes unless they are engaged in certain “essential activities.” These activities include:

- Engaging in essential activities such as grocery shopping, obtaining medical care, walking, running, bicycling or gardening.
- Providing or obtaining essential governmental functions or services.
- Operating or working at essential businesses such as healthcare operations and essential Infrastructure, grocery stores, pet supply stores, agricultural production and processing operations, and gas stations.
- Operating or working at non-public-serving small businesses.
- All businesses within the County – except essential businesses and non-public-serving small businesses – are required to cease all activities except minimum basic operations, such as payroll processing. However, businesses may continue operations consisting exclusively of work performed at employees’ or contractors’ own places of residence.
- All travel is prohibited, except essential travel such as travel for work authorized under this order; to engage in essential activities; to care for elderly persons, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities or other vulnerable persons; and to return to a place of residence from outside Ventura County.
- When outside their places of residence, all persons must maintain, as reasonably possible, a physical distance of at least six feet from any other person and comply with all other Social Distancing Requirements.

“There are people around you who are in greater need than you. Be generous with those things you have that you can share and can drop off at their place. We will all come through this together. Ventura County is a County that cares,” said Doctor Levin.

Moving forward daily positive cases, the age range of the patient and their locations will be reported on [www.vcemergency.com](http://www.vcemergency.com). The new order requires all private labs to report the number of tests they have completed each day. The total number of private and public tests will also be reported on the website.

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