

Contact: 805-212-9484

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COVID-19 Labor Day Playbook: No gatherings. Wear masks. Hold at 6 feet.
Holiday weekend is a crucial moment to get the coronavirus under control

Ventura, CA - Usually, marking the last weekend of Summer, Labor Day is traditionally a time for BBQ's and gatherings as the last hoorah for Summer. Public Health leaders are offering a combo of encouragement and warning.

"We're making progress on COVID-19 – but this is the point where we need to stay focused on keeping those numbers down. Gatherings like BBQ's increase the chance that COVID can spread. Please plan not to plan on gatherings," said Public Health Officer Doctor Robert Levin. "This is a time to wear a mask and stay 6 feet apart. All of us can help each other and our communities by keeping up the cautions and staying committed to not gathering. Let's take care of each other."

Infection rates are generally trending down slightly in California, but other holidays this summer have fueled explosions of coronavirus transmissions. We are at a critical crossroads in the fight against COVID-19.

The nationwide summer surge began with careless Memorial Day gatherings and continued after the 4th of July holiday weekend. What happens this weekend could determine the path COVID-19 takes for months — and how open or closed communities might be the rest of the year.

"Right now, COVID is driven by behavior," said Public Health Director Rigo Vargas. "We can slow COVID if we all work together to stay apart. It can spread quickly. We can't let ourselves reverse the progress. We're turning a corner and we can't repeat Memorial Day weekend surges that were seen throughout the State. A new surge means closing things down even more, maybe until the end of the year, and it means many people will get sick and some will die."

Gatherings are prohibited in the state of California and in the County of Ventura. People are only permitted to gather with members of their household. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said two-thirds of COVID-19 infections come from people not showing symptoms – either because they're asymptomatic or the symptoms haven't developed yet. That means you can't know if someone could be transmitting the coronavirus.

"Any one of us can make things much worse if we're not careful," said Doctor Levin. "But each of us can help make things better. These actions to not gather will get us closer to gathering again. If we get through this weekend committed to public health precautions, doing what we're supposed to do, we're going to be in good shape going into the fall. Please work with us to fight COVID-19."