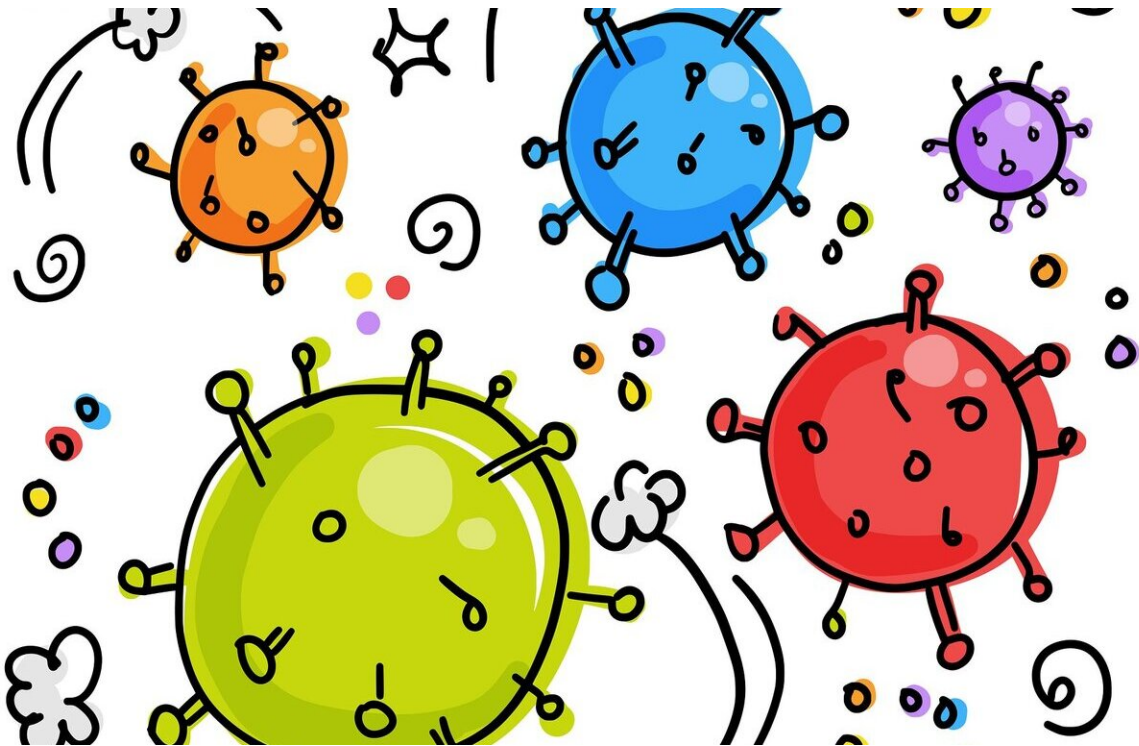


California reports record 695 virus deaths in a day

January 10 2021



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California health authorities reported Saturday a record one-day total of 695 coronavirus deaths as many hospitals strain under unprecedented caseloads.

California's [death toll](#) since the start of the pandemic rose to 29,233,

according to the state Department of Public Health's website.

Meanwhile, hospitalizations are nearly 22,000, and state models project the number could reach 30,000 by Feb 1.

A surge of cases following Halloween and Thanksgiving produced record hospitalizations in California, and now the most seriously ill of those patients are dying in unprecedented numbers.

Already, many hospitals in Los Angeles and other hard-hit areas are struggling to keep up and warned they may need to ration care as intensive care beds dwindle.

Every intensive care unit bed at St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard is full, and emergency rooms are packed across Ventura County, about 60 miles (97 kilometers) northwest of Los Angeles, the [Ventura County Star reported](#).

When a code blue is sounded at the hospital signaling a cardiac arrest, nurse Yesenia Avila says a little prayer.

The codes have been coming often. On one particular shift, she said three COVID-19 patients died within an hour.

"We've never seen this much [death](#) before," Avila told the newspaper. "I've been in [health care](#) for 22 years, and I've never been scared. Right now, I am ... I fear for my children."

The biggest fear is that hospitals will be tipped into rationing care in a few weeks when people who ignored social distancing rules to gather with friends and relatives for Christmas and New Year's Eve start showing up for medical care.

The post-Christmas surge was worsening in Los Angeles County, where figures released Thursday and Friday showed a new daily caseload of nearly 20,000, significantly above the average of about 14,000 new cases a day over the last week. In all, 100,00 new cases were recorded this week.

With new figures released Saturday, the county surpassed 12,000 deaths caused by COVID-19—1,000 of which happened in the last four days.

"The speed with which we are reaching grim milestones of COVID-19 deaths and cases is a devastating reflection of the immense spread that is occurring across the county," said Barbara Ferrer, public health director for Los Angeles County. "And this accelerated spread reflects the many unsafe actions individuals took over the holidays."

Dr. Paul Simon, the county Department of Public Health's chief science officer, told the [Los Angeles Times](#) he expects the number of hospitalizations and deaths to remain high throughout January because of what occurred over the holidays.

"We're going to see high levels of hospitalization and, sadly, deaths over at least the next two to four weeks."

Los Angeles County has a fourth of the state's population, but it accounts for about 40% of COVID-19 deaths.

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