

# Bay Area Residents Rush to Get COVID-19 Tests Ahead of Holiday Gatherings

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COVID-19 tests and booster shots are the in-demand items as many families are getting ready for the holiday celebrations.

Because of that, at-home test kits are getting tough to find at many retailers. In the East Bay, some county leaders are giving them away.

At Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia's El Cerrito office, there's been a constant flow of people dropping by for the last two days. Contra Costa resident Susan Bumps told NBC Bay Area on Wednesday that it hasn't been easy to find at-home test kits at stores.

"Everybody we knew went and couldn't find any. So, some friends heard about this and texted us, and so we came down to get them," she said.

Bumps said everyone in her family gathering for the holidays is vaccinated and boosted.

Gioia said there's been no shortage of people looking for the tests.

"In the last two days, we've distributed approximately 1,200 to 1,300 packages and each has two tests in them. So that's around 2,500 tests," he said.

Gioia's office will be passing out the kits on Thursday morning as well.

The Contra Costa County Department of Public Health is also passing them out at its testing sites. This all comes as Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a plan to distribute 6 million testing kits to schools.

The idea is to have them available for kids to be tested before they return to class after the holiday break. Newsom said that he's committed to keeping classrooms open, even as infections from the omicron variant surge.

State testing sites will also have expanded hours.

In an effort to shore up to staffing and safety at medical facilities, Newsom is urging all health care workers to get their boosters by Feb. 1 and urging everyone else who's eligible to get their booster shots as well.

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