



August 7, 2020

Livermore Residents,

One of my favorite sayings is from Hillel, a rabbi of the early Common Era. He said, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself alone, WHAT am I? And if not now, then when?" Seems to me that those words apply to all of us now.

Our current COVID case rates are inching up to 600/100,000. That is only those cases we have identified—we know that we undercount due to those who are asymptomatic as well as continuing testing issues statewide. That is double Pleasanton's rate, almost triple Dublin's rate, and places us number five in Alameda County. We do not know exactly why Livermore numbers are so high. But we do know that the one thing each of us can do is follow the safety protocols: cover your face, keep your distance, and wash your hands. And that's not happening enough.

If you are over two, cover your nose and mouth completely if you are outside and closer than 30 feet to anyone not in your social bubble. Cover your nose and mouth if you are at work. Cover your nose and mouth if you are preparing or serving food.

What about a walk outside? No, you don't have to cover your face the whole time. But you DO have to have a face covering in evidence, ready to put on when you pass someone else. You do have to cover your face when you are walking with a friend who is not in your social bubble—even if you think you will stay six feet apart. Because be real: you'll get closer than six feet to each other. You'll breathe on each other. You'll have a conversation and tiny droplets will hang in the air between you. Cover your face. Just do it.

What about eating outside? Stay six feet apart. And yes, uncover your face to eat or drink. Then cover up again while you are talking. Because when you breathe and when you talk, you put tiny droplets in the air. Cover your face. Just do it.

Yesterday, my husband and I took a walk. We were the only ones with masks on or in evidence. We were also the only people who stepped far out of the path to maintain distance. Yesterday, I picked up food from a downtown restaurant. The people dining together outside were not wearing face coverings even when they were not eating or drinking.

I get it. These rules are annoying. They are inconvenient. But what are we if we cannot be inconvenienced for the good of others? We are six months into this pandemic and

we are emphatically not experiencing it the same way. Some of us are mildly inconvenienced. My husband and I are in that category. Our livelihood is not at risk; we have no preexisting health conditions; we have a family bubble with our daughter and her family, so we are not completely isolated; and I can do my work remotely. We are very, very fortunate. Which means that we have that much more responsibility to support others who are at more risk.

For many, if not most of us, this pandemic is a threat to life and livelihood. Small businesses can survive for a month, two months, three months. We are six months in. Hair and beauty professionals want to open up—they make a good case for themselves. But the state and county will not allow those openings until our COVID numbers turn around. For these people, COVID is not an inconvenience, it's an economic disaster.

Many people have no choice but to work jobs that put them at risk—whether they be essential workers, or simply feeding their families and paying the rent. For these people, COVID is an existential threat.

For all of us, covering our noses and mouths, distancing from each other, and washing hands often are simple inconveniences. We should do them for our own sakes. We should do them for others—or WHAT are we?
And we should do them now.



Trish Munro
Council Member