

COVID-19 Testing Information for Healthcare Providers

There are currently no restrictions on who can be tested for COVID-19 and commercial testing is becoming more available. Healthcare providers may test any patient with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath) but until testing supplies and laboratory capacity are widely available, public health is asking providers to follow the **below recommendations**.

The following patients with COVID-19 symptoms should be tested for COVID-19

- Patients hospitalized with severe lower respiratory illness
- Patients who work in any setting where healthcare services are delivered (including: hospital, department of corrections, juvenile detention centers, mental/behavioral health clinics, long-term care facilities, and similar)
- Patients working in other public safety occupations (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter, EMS)
- Patients who live or work in an institutional or congregate setting (e.g., corrections, long term care facility, homeless/shelters)
- Patients working in critical infrastructure occupations (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacist, restaurants, gas stations, public utilities, etc.)

The following patients with COVID-19 symptoms should contact their healthcare provider and be tested for COVID-19 if their symptoms worsen or their healthcare provider recommends testing

- Patients older than 60 years
- Patients with underlying medical conditions
- Pregnant women

The following individuals experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (Fever greater than 100.4F or subjective fever or cough or shortness of breath) can be tested at Drive Thru Clinics, as available

- Patients who work in any setting where healthcare services are delivered (including: hospital, department of corrections, juvenile detention centers, mental/behavioral health clinics, long-term care facilities, and similar)
- Patients working in other public safety occupations (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter, EMS)
- Patients who live or work in an institutional or congregate setting (e.g., corrections, long term care facility, homeless/shelters)

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

- Patients working in critical infrastructure occupations (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacists, restaurants, gas stations, public utilities, etc)
- Individuals in high risk groups referred by their physician (e.g., elderly , underlying medical conditions, pregnant women)
- Any other referred by physician or telemedicine consultation

Younger (less than 60 years old), healthy individuals with mild illness do not need to be tested and testing is not recommended in persons who are asymptomatic.

A negative test result does not rule out an infection.

If COVID-19 is being considered, whether testing is performed or not, please provide patients with the following guidance documents so that they know how to best prevent the spread of infection to other people, and to minimize phone calls to your office and to public health.

- [Patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19](#)
- [Patients who were exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case](#)
- [Unexposed patients with COVID-19 symptoms](#)

Testing at Commercial Laboratories

In general, healthcare providers should send specimens for COVID-19 testing to commercial laboratories.

Until the University of Washington Virology Lab has more testing capacity readily available, they are prioritizing specimens from hospitalized patients, healthcare workers and first responders.

Other specimens can be sent to LabCorp, Quest and other commercial laboratories doing testing.

Please see each laboratory's test menu for specimen collection instructions, submission forms, and shipping requirements. Please be sure to include the patient's name, date of birth, address and phone number. The Washington State Insurance Commissioner has ordered all Washington health insurers to waive deductibles and copays for COVID-19 testing.

Testing at the Public Health Laboratories (PHL)

Specimens from the following patients can be sent to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories:

- Healthcare workers
- Patients in other public safety occupations (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter, EMS)

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

- Patients involved in an illness cluster in a facility or group (e.g., healthcare, school, corrections, business)
- Patients with no health insurance

If seeking testing at the Public Health Laboratories, call your [local health jurisdiction \(LHJ\)](#) with the above information to discuss the case. If possible, please call 8 AM – 4:30 PM. PHL will fax its results to the submitter and LHJ.

For PHL testing, collect specimens and send with the below nCoV form including submitter name, address, phone number, and fax number.

- Collect a single nasopharyngeal (NP) specimen using a synthetic swabs and place in 2-3 ml viral transport media
- Collection of oropharyngeal swabs (OP) is a lower priority and if collected should be combined in the same tube as the NP.
- Collection of sputum should only be done for those patients with productive coughs. Induction of sputum is not recommended. If a lower respiratory tract specimen (sputum, BAL, or tracheal aspirate) is available, collect lower respiratory sample in sterile container and nasopharyngeal (NP) synthetic swab in 2-3 ml viral transport media.
- For all samples, put specimen type and two identifiers (e.g., name, birthdate) on tubes and form, and store at 2-8°C.

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/PublicHealthLaboratories/MicrobiologyLabTestMenu>

See the DOH website for other resources: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>