

This guidance applies to all facility types, including emergency departments, outpatient settings, inpatient settings, and intensive care.

Follow this guidance to

- determine if COVID-19 testing is indicated
- understand your options for laboratory testing
- safely care for your patient and collect specimens

Remember: Patients undergoing testing should **isolate** at home until results are received.

Confirmed cases should isolate at home for at least 7 days (and afebrile and feeling well for at least 3 days).

1

Determine if COVID-19 testing is clinically indicated.

Does the patient exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19?

fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, nausea, diarrhea, loss of smell or taste, muscle aches, general sense of being unwell

2

Understand your options for laboratory testing.

If a patient is **not** in a high-risk group, and a test result will not inform clinical care, please be mindful of ongoing shortages of specimen collection materials and reagents.

If patient is in a **high-risk group***, a consultation for testing can be performed through TDH. You may also consider testing through **Quest, LabCorp, or hospital lab**. These options do not require TDH approval.

3

Safely care for your patient and collect specimens.

Setting	Target Personnel	Activity	Type of PPE or procedure
Triage	Healthcare Personnel	Preliminary screening (not direct contact)	Maintain spatial distance of >3 ft No specific PPE required for HCP
	Patient with respiratory symptoms	Any	Place surgical mask on patient Minimize time in waiting room
Patient Room	Healthcare Personnel	Direct patient care	Gown, gloves, facemask, eye protection (goggles or face shield)
	Healthcare Personnel	Specimen collection ¹	Gown, gloves, facemask, eye protection *Depending on PPE supply, consider use of N-95 respirator if there is concern about aerosol generation (no AIIR required)
	Healthcare Personnel	Aerosol-generating procedures ²	Gown, gloves, N-95 respirator, eye protection (goggles or face shield)
	Patient with respiratory symptoms	Routine clinical care	To the degree possible, patients with respiratory symptoms should wear a surgical mask during encounters with the healthcare team

¹ Preferred specimen type is an NP swab and OP swab combined into a single collection vial.

² Aerosol generating procedures include (but are not limited to) sputum induction, airway suctioning, endotracheal intubation, bronchoscopy, positive pressure ventilation (BiPAP, CPAP), nebulizer treatment, and tracheostomy care.

*High-Risk Groups

- Hospitalized patients
- Contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases
- Occupations with exposures to large numbers of contacts (e.g., teachers)
- Healthcare workers
- Nursing home residents
- Severely immunocompromised patients
- Pregnant women

To request testing at TDH, please call **615-741-7247**.

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