

LAB TESTING UPDATE

(3/10/2020)

CURRENT CDC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COVID-19 TESTING

- Fever or signs of a lower respiratory illness, including cough or shortness of breath with known close contact with a lab-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days.
- Fever and signs of lower respiratory illness where symptom onset occurred within **14 days of travel from an area with high levels of COVID-19 (China, Japan, South Korea, Italy and Iran)** or other affected geographic areas as defined by community transmission
- Symptomatic, increased risk, individuals including:
 - Adults \geq 65 years old and individuals
 - Patients with chronic medical conditions and/or an immunocompromised state (e.g. hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, receiving immunosuppressive medications, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease)
- Patients with bilateral pneumonia and respiratory failure without an alternative viral diagnosis. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria

Ultimately, the CDC calls for the clinician to use their judgement to determine if a patient experiencing signs and symptoms of coronavirus should be tested.

WHERE SHOULD TESTS BE DONE

Patients calling the clinic who are suspected of having **symptoms related to COVID-19** who are **stable** and do not require acute medical intervention should isolate themselves at home. Clinicians should **notify the local health department** who will contact the patient to arrange testing. ([See Care Alert #3 for suggested protocols](#))

If a stable patient suspected of having COVID-19 **presents to your office, limit exposure** to other patients and staff ([see Care Alert #3 for recommended protocols](#)). Testing options include:

- Notify the health department and send the patients home to remain in isolation until contacted by the health department who will coordinate testing
- Specimens may be obtained and sent for testing to a limited number of labs.

SPECIMEN COLLECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

If testing in the clinic:

- **Only the patient and the staff** performing the test should be in the room
- Because specimen collection (e.g. nasopharyngeal swap) is likely to induce cough or sneezing, testing should be **done at the end of the appointment**
- The staff responsible for collecting the specimens should **wear recommended PPE** (including a gown, gloves, eye protection, and respiratory protection that is at least as protective as a NIOSH-approved N95 filtering facepiece respirator)
- **Nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swaps** are the preferred collection method
- Sample should be submitted **frozen**

CURRENT OPTIONS IN NORTH TEXAS 93/10/2020)

Lapcorp – Testing **is** available through Labcorp.

- **Labcorp will limit processing of up to 5 specimens to 5 specimens from each clinic** (exceptions are made **only** based on practice size and type)
- Labcorp will not collect specimens. DO NOT send patients to Labcorp for specimen collection.
- Labcorp recommends healthcare providers contact local or state health authorities to obtain guidance on managing patients with suspected COVID-19.
- The following link will be updated regularly: <https://www.labcorp.com/tests/139900/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-naa>

CPL: As of 3/10/2020 CPL testing is **not** available.

Quest: Quest just released their COVID-19 test on 3/9/2020.

- Quest reported they are set up to test specimens in one laboratory in California and hope to have more ready by next week.
- They are **nearly at capacity** already, as they are also performing tests for the CDC.
- They are sending **limited tests from the DFW market**. They hope to expand services soon.

COST CONSIDERATIONS

Testing for coronavirus is currently available through the CDC at **no cost**.

Cigna reported on March, 5th 2020, "... customers will have access to coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, as prescribed by health practitioners, and the company (Cigna) will waive all co-pays or cost-shares to help fight the rapid spread of the virus in the U.S. and for its globally mobile customers."

If considering in-office testing, verifying cost to patient should be considered.

Commercial testing is becoming increasingly available as the FDA approves additional designated testing labs. We will monitor this rapidly changing situation and update you as new information becomes available.