



## Health Advisory for Idaho Healthcare Providers: Testing for Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) — update 3/6/2020

### Situation Overview

Criteria to guide testing of patients for COVID-19 have been expanded to a wider group of symptomatic patients. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>.

**Clinicians should use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested.** Decisions on which patients receive testing should be based on the local epidemiology of COVID-19, as well as the clinical course of illness. Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have had fever or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing). See CDC's "Evaluating and Reporting Persons Under Investigation (PUI): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>.

**Clinicians are strongly encouraged to first test for other causes of respiratory illness, including influenza.**

**At least two commercial laboratories will begin offering testing for COVID-19 in the coming days.** These tests will not require public health notification prior to testing. Positive results will be reported to public health officials, who might contact providers or patients. **LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics have both issued press releases concerning the availability of testing.**

**To test specimens for COVID-19 at the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories (IBL), notify public health officials.** Report symptomatic patients with possible COVID-19 to Southwest District Health (208-455-5442) or the Division of Public Health Epidemiology Section (208-334-5939). Public health epidemiologists will prioritize testing. ***High priority will be given to specimens from symptomatic people who meet one or more of the following criteria:***

- had close contact with a person with a confirmed COVID-19 infection
- recently traveled to an area with widespread community transmission of COVID-19
- have severe respiratory illness of no known cause
- are health care workers
- are long-term care facility residents with respiratory disease and negative influenza testing.

Other specimens, such as those from patients with mild respiratory symptoms and no known exposures, will have standard testing priority. Testing at IBL is not offered for asymptomatic people. Contact IBL at 208-334-2235 or see the IBL website (<https://statelab.idaho.gov>) for instructions on specimen collection and submission.

### Additional resources

- Infection control recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>
- CDC COVID-19 for healthcare: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/index.html>
- Idaho Official Resources for the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov>

***Healthier Together***

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