Oregon Health Authority

PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

COVID-19 Testing Basics

Who should be tested?

Many people are interested in testing for COVID-19 out of concern for themselves and their loved ones. If you have trouble breathing or feel very ill, contact your healthcare provider or, in case of emergency, call 911.

Healthcare providers may decide to have you first tested for other illnesses, like the flu, based on your possible exposure history and any other symptoms you might have.

- **Individuals who feel very ill should seek appropriate care.** If it is an emergency, call 911. If it is not an emergency but you feel sick enough to need a medical appointment, call your doctor's office. If you don't have a doctor, call 211 for a list of clinics near you. If necessary, visit your local urgent care center.

- **Call before you go.** If you have flu-like symptoms or have reason to think you might have COVID-19, let your healthcare provider know before you visit. This will help avoid exposing anyone else at the provider's facility.

Where can I get tested?

Contact your primary healthcare provider or a clinic. They can determine whether you need testing. Though hospitals may request lab testing for some high-risk patients, emergency rooms should not be considered a primary source for patient-requested testing.

If it's determined I need testing for COVID-19, what should I expect?

Testing for COVID-19 will likely involve your healthcare provider taking a sample on a swab through the nose.

What if I feel like I've been exposed but don't need to see a healthcare provider or get tested?

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19, and you get fever, cough or trouble breathing, stay away from other people, so you don't get them sick. Consult with your doctor or a clinic via phone for instructions.

What if I test positive?

Your healthcare provider and public health staff will also give you information about how to keep from spreading the virus to your family and friends. You will need to isolate yourself from other people for as long as your healthcare provider instructs. You will also need to avoid coughing on others and to wash your hands frequently, to protect them from infection.

How long does it take to receive test results?

Results are generally available within 3-4 days. Your healthcare provider may ask you to isolate yourself during this time, to limit possible spread of the virus.

Which labs can test for COVID-19?

The Oregon State Public Health Lab (OSPHL) and commercial laboratories, such as LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics can currently test for COVID-19. Some local health systems will be able to test soon.

How are healthcare workers being protected?

Workers collecting samples must wear personal protective equipment, which may include gowns, gloves, eye protection and masks. We are sharing guidance with healthcare workers and facilities to help them stay safe.

From our testing guidance:

Clinicians in the community can order COVID-19 testing at their discretion through commercial labs, including LabCorp and Quest Diagnostics. A). Clinicians do not need to routinely notify the local public health authority (LPHA) or OHA when evaluating patients with respiratory illness or ordering COVID-19 testing from commercial laboratories. B). While it is circulating, clinicians should consider testing for influenza before ordering COVID-19 testing.

You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact the Public Health Division at 971-673-0977. We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.