
March 15, 2020: Important Message from Washington State Department of Health (EDITED):

KEY MESSAGE: Until testing supplies and laboratory capacity are increased, 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
- Healthcare workers
- Patients in other public safety occupations (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter, EMS)
- Patients involved in an illness cluster in a facility or institution (e.g., healthcare, school, corrections, homeless/shelters, other institution/congregate setting)

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

Younger, healthy individuals with mild illness do not need to be tested. They should stay home for 7 days or 72 hours after symptom resolution, whichever is longer. Additionally, testing is not recommended in persons who are asymptomatic. A negative test result does not rule out an infection.

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).

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.

- Patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19
- Patients who were exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case
- Unexposed patients with COVID-19 symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clinical Features</th>
<th>Risk Factors?</th>
<th>SARS-CoV-2 Testing?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asymptomatic</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of acute respiratory infection (such as fever, new cough, new shortness of breath, myalgias, etc.) And does NOT require hospitalization</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Defer to clinical judgement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symptoms of acute respiratory infection (such as fever, new cough, new shortness of breath, myalgias, etc.)</td>
<td>Special Populations*</td>
<td>Yes*</td>
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</tbody>
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Table continues on next page
### Clinical Features

| Symptoms of acute respiratory infection (such as fever, new cough, new shortness of breath, myalgias, etc.) | Any of the following in the last 14 days before symptom onset:  
• Travel to affected areas\(^1\)  
• Close contact with a confirmed case\(^2\)  
• Spent time at skilled nursing facilities (including Life Care Center) | Yes\(^3\) |

| Symptoms of acute respiratory infection (such as fever, new cough, new shortness of breath, myalgias, etc.) requiring hospitalization | Yes\(^3\) |

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1 **UW Medicine Current Outbreak List:** Please refer to the [UW Medicine COVID-19 Website](#).

2 **Close contact:** Approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

3 **SARS-CoV-2 sample collection:** Nasopharyngeal swabs often generate a strong cough reflex. Standard/Contact/Droplet precautions are recommended. Please remember to collect samples from both nostrils, using the same swab. For additional instructions, please refer to Sample Collection for COVID19 Testing on our [UW Medicine COVID-19 Website](#). For ordering information, please review [UW Laboratory Test Guide](#). Please strongly consider testing for influenza/RSV when testing for COVID-19 as other respiratory viruses are currently circulating and co-infections can occur.

* **Special Populations:** Older adults (age ≥ 60 years), immunocompromised individuals (e.g., cancer, solid organ transplant, other immunosuppressive drugs, chronic lung disease, hemodialysis, advanced HIV), pregnant women, and people living homeless or in congregate facilities (such as dorms, fraternities, sororities, shelters, jail, prison, skilled nursing facilities, adult family homes). For immunocompromised patients (including SCCA and solid organ transplant), please refer to our Immunocompromised Protocol. For pregnant patients, please refer to our Pregnancy Protocol. For **symptomatic healthcare workers**, please refer to our FAQ for Staff with Acute Respiratory Infections. All of the abovementioned protocols can be found on our [UW Medicine COVID-19 Website](#).