

COVID-19 Testing: Healthcare Provider Guidance (last updated 3/19/20)

COVID-19 testing

Testing for COVID-19 is available at:

- Arizona State Public Health Laboratory (ASPHL) for patients who **meet the Persons Under Investigation (PUI) criteria** below **AND**
- [At commercial laboratories](#) (LabCorp, Quest Diagnostics, and others) for patients **who do not meet PUI criteria** and healthcare providers would like to test. **Do not call Public Health to obtain this testing.**

To obtain approval for testing at ASPHL:

The patient must meet the PUI criteria below **AND** the provider must contact Maricopa County Department of Public Health.

Testing can be ordered by healthcare providers through commercial laboratories **without Public Health approval**. Healthcare providers should follow their facility’s protocol for ordering send-out commercial laboratory tests.

Healthcare providers caring for a patient with fever and/or acute respiratory symptoms should:

- Obtain detailed travel history, including all national and international travel, for the 14 days prior to symptom onset;
- Consider adding travel screening, including all countries under [CDC Travel Warning Level 3](#), to your patient triage protocol;

Criteria to Guide Evaluation of Persons Under Investigation (PUI)

Clinical Features	Plus	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever ¹ OR signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) NOT requiring hospitalization	AND	Any person, including health care workers ² , who has had close contact³ with a laboratory-confirmed⁴ COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever ¹ AND signs/symptoms of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) NOT requiring hospitalization in a person with a high-risk occupation* OR who lives in a congregate setting [†]	AND	No source of exposure has been identified
Fever ¹ AND severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization, radiographic confirmation of bilateral pulmonary infiltrates, & without alternative explanatory diagnosis (negative respiratory viral panel, including influenza) ^{5,6}	AND	No source of exposure has been identified

¹Fever may be subjective or confirmed.

²For healthcare personnel, testing may be considered if there has been exposure to a person with suspected COVID-19 without laboratory confirmation

³Close contact is defined at the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>

⁴Documentation of laboratory-confirmation of 2019-nCoV may not be possible for travelers or persons caring for patients in other countries.

⁶Category includes single or clusters of patients with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) of unknown etiology in which COVID-19 is being considered

⁷Also consider testing for Coccidioidomycosis and Legionella

*Healthcare personnel, school personnel, childcare worker, jail/prison personnel, or other similar occupation

[†]Jail/prison, long-term care facility or nursing home, university housing, or other similar setting

For all patients who meet COVID-19 PUI criteria:

- 1) Healthcare personnel entering the room should **use droplet, contact, and standard precautions, plus eye protection** (e.g., goggles or a face shield) and **patients can be evaluated in a private room** with the door closed (unless performing aerosol-generating procedures, which should be performed in an AIIR);
- 2) Immediately **notify your healthcare facility’s infection control personnel**;
- 3) If you are seeking approval for COVID-19 testing through the state public health laboratory **only, notify Maricopa County Department of Public Health** at (commercial testing does not require public health notification):
 - a. **Monday–Friday 8AM–5PM** — call **(602) 506-6767** and ask for a Surveillance Nurse or;
 - b. **After 5PM and on weekends** — call **(602) 747-7111** and ask for the Provider On-Call.
- 4) **Collect specimens for testing** for COVID-19:
 - a. **Preferred specimen** - nasopharyngeal [NP] swab in universal/viral transport medium (**if transport medium is not available**, the NP swab can be placed in a sterile tube filled with sterile saline)
 - b. Acceptable alternative specimens **if the patient is hospitalized** – oropharyngeal [OP] swab, lower respiratory specimen (e.g., BAL, tracheal aspirate)
 - c. **The preferred method of shipment is frozen at -70 °C or below**. However, samples can be shipped refrigerated at 2-8 °C and are stable at this temperature up to 72 hours.