



Health Alert



City of Chicago
Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor

www.chicagohan.org

Chicago Department of Public Health
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COVID-19: Testing Recommendation and Public Health Testing Updates

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Summary and Action Items

- Commercial and hospital-based testing options for COVID-19 are now available
- CDPH recommends against testing persons with mild illness who can be safely managed at home
- The authorization process for testing meeting criteria for prioritization through IDPH laboratories is now through an online request form; faxing or emailing the PUI form is no longer needed
- Submission of specimens to IDPH lab should be limited to one nasopharyngeal (NP) swab per patient

Background: Several commercial and hospital-based laboratories are now offering COVID-19 testing using a molecular assay. However, **CDPH strongly recommends against testing persons with mild illness** who can be safely managed at home, unless a diagnosis may impact patient management. This will minimize possible exposures to healthcare workers, patients and the public and reduce the demand for personal protective equipment. A list of commercial and hospital-based laboratories may be found [here](http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/health-care-providers): <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/health-care-providers>

Testing Authorization Process: Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) laboratories will continue to support testing for the situations of severe consequence and those requiring public health action. Pre-authorization of a specimen is required for testing at the IDPH laboratory and provided for by filling the [Online Request Form](https://is.gd/COVID19IDPHProviderTestRequest) available here: <https://is.gd/COVID19IDPHProviderTestRequest>. Online approved requests will receive an authorization code immediately. Completing and faxing or sending an encrypted email with the paper PUI form is **NOT** needed if you complete the online survey.

Patients that will be prioritized for testing at the IDPH lab are specified on the [Chicago HAN page](https://www.chicagohan.org/covid-19): <https://www.chicagohan.org/covid-19> For patients who reside in Chicago, if you receive an automated response indicating the patient does not meet those criteria and have additional information that may change this assessment, please email us at: covid19pui@cityofchicago.org. Please include the REDCap ID number and we will review and manually assign a code if appropriate. One nasopharyngeal swab per patient only should be submitted along with the [Laboratory Test Requisition Form](#). Prior to submission, ensure all sections of the form are complete as missing fields may delay testing. The authorization code should be placed at the top of the form.

For testing performed by IDPH lab, results are disseminated directly to submitting providers based on the submitter information included in the Test requisition form. CDPH does not have direct access to laboratory accession or result information.

Patient Counseling: Individuals tested for COVID-19 should be instructed to restrict their activity as outlined in [Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Exposures: Geographic Risk and Contacts of Laboratory-confirmed Cases](#). Instruct non-hospitalized patients being tested for COVID-19 to self-isolate. Patients should follow home care instructions until they are told by public health officials or their health care provider that they are no longer infectious. Other guidance documents for provider and patients are available at www.chicago.gov/coronavirus.