How to Obtain a COVID-19 Test for Your Patient

Last Updated: April 2, 2020, 12:27pm

Please refer to the instructions below for specific testing procedures for different populations. This is an interim system. We plan to launch an online system in the next few days.

**UPDATE, April 2:** Please refer to the last category in this document, “Other Populations for Testing,” for instructions on ordering tests patients of any age with COVID-19 symptoms.

Reminder: It is NOT necessary to call the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) for permission to test your patient.

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**Hospitalized Patient**

Hospital team orders and obtains NP swab specimen and sends to the hospital lab.

If the hospital lab performs the test:

1. Follow hospital process.
2. Complete and fax [PUI for COVID-19 Reporting Form](#) to 401-222-2488.
3. Report positive results to RIDOH at 401-222-2577.

-OR-

If the hospital lab does not perform the test:

1. Complete and fax [PUI for COVID-19 Reporting Form](#) to 401-222-2488.
2. Hospital lab completes [State Health Lab Test Requisition Form](#).
3. Hospital lab transports specimen to RIDOH State Health Laboratories (RISHL).
4. RIDOH calls ordering clinician as soon as the result is available. (Please do not call RIDOH to check on the status of a test).

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**Nursing Home or Congregate-Living Resident**

Facility medical team calls RIDOH at 401-222-2577 to report a concern and, if appropriate, obtain specimen collection kits from the RIDOH State Health Laboratories (RISHL). Facility medical team obtains NP specimen and sends to RISHL.

1. Complete and fax [PUI for COVID-19 Reporting Form](#) to 401-222-2488.
2. Transport specimen to RIDOH State Health Laboratories (RISHL).
3. RIDOH calls ordering clinician as soon as the result is available. (Please do not call RIDOH to check on the status of a test).
Healthcare Workers, including EMS workers

Workers’ personal healthcare providers must place an order for testing at a drive-up specimen collection site exclusively for healthcare workers and EMS workers.

1. Call 401-222-2577 to order and schedule a test.
2. Complete and fax PUI for COVID-19 Reporting Form to 401-222-2488.
4. Specimen is collected at drive-up site.
5. Specimen is transported to RIDOH State Health Laboratories (RISHL).
6. RIDOH calls ordering clinician as soon as the test result is available. (Please do not call RIDOH to check on the status of a test).

Other Populations for Testing

- Patients 65 and older.
- Patients of any age with underlying conditions placing them at higher risk for COVID-19 complications.
- First responders (fire, police, non-EMS workers) and other critical infrastructure workers.

For these populations, there are testing two options, depending on the patient: a drive-up specimen collection site or a Respiratory Clinic.

Drive-up Specimen Collection Site

If the patient has only mild symptoms and no physical exam is needed, a personal healthcare provider can place an order for testing at a drive-up specimen collection site.

1. Complete a COVID-19 testing order form (either a fillable form or downloadable form).
2. Fax completed order form to 401-208-0411. If it presents a busy signal, please use 401-455-8444 or 401-455-8448. Please only use ESCLCOVID19@ESCLAB.COM if all three of these fax lines present a busy signal.
3. Indicate on the order form which location your patient will go for testing and the time block. PLEASE NOTE, the time frame at the bottom of the form must be circled.
4. All testing will be conducted the business day after the order is placed.
5. Complete and fax PUI for COVID-19 Reporting Form to 401-222-2488.
6. Give patient PUI Instructions. Please note that neither patients nor providers will receive a confirmation that their appointment was booked. The patient should simply arrive at the lab at their appointed time.
7. If the patient arrives at the testing site and for any reason they are not in the system, they can still be accommodated that day. The patient will be asked to pull to the side and call their physician. Their physician can order the test by calling 401-455-8440 or faxing 401-455-8448.
8. Specimen is collected at drive-up site then transported to commercial lab. For children younger than 12 years old, a parent or caregiver will be instructed to perform the nasal swab.
9. Ordering provider will receive lab results from commercial lab. Test result may take three to four days.
10. Report positive results to RIDOH at **401-222-2577**.

**Respiratory Clinic**

If the patient requires clinical assessment with a physical exam but does not require an ED-level of care, a personal healthcare provider can refer or patient can call a [Respiratory Clinic](#) at a Primary Care Practice, Health Center, or Urgent Care Facility:

- A Respiratory Clinic can perform clinical assessment, including physical exam.
- Most respiratory clinics can obtain specimens and order tests.
- See the list of available sites [here](#).
- Patients (or providers referring patients) must call ahead for an appointment and instructions.

If, after a clinical assessment, it is determined that the patient requires testing, the Respiratory Clinic can order a test through a commercial lab 

-OR-
Place an order for testing at a drive-up specimen collection site as described above.

**Process for Respiratory Clinics to order tests through a commercial lab:**

1. Complete a COVID-19 testing order form (either the fillable form or a downloadable form).
2.Fax completed form to **401-208-0411**.
3. Complete and fax [PUI for COVID-19 Reporting Form](#) to **401-222-2488**.
4. Give patient [PUI Instructions](#).
5. Specimen is transported to commercial lab.
6. Ordering provider will receive lab results from commercial lab. Test result may take three to four days.
7. Report positive results to RIDOH at **401-222-2577**.

Respiratory Clinics must order tests through commercial labs only. These tests are **not** processed through RIDOH State Health Laboratories.