



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY  
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Michael Hill *Health Agency Director*

Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH *Health Officer/Public Health Director*

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## PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY: IN-PATIENT TESTING FOR COVID-19

*This is an update to the advisory of March 5, 2020*

**Date:** March 13, 2020  
**Contact:** Christine Gaiger, SPHN  
805-781-5500, [cgaiger@@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:cgaiger@@co.slo.ca.us)

### Appropriately screen individuals prior to in-patient testing for COVID-19

Appropriate candidates for COVID-19 testing include:

- Patients with fever ( $T \geq 100.4$  F) and symptoms (cough and/or shortness of breath and/or fatigue)
- History of sick contact consistent with COVID-19 signs and symptoms
- Incubation period consistent with COVID-19 (typically 5-7 days)
- Hospitalized patients in whom other likely diagnoses have been ruled out (e.g., Respiratory Pathogen Panel is negative)
- Nature of disease onset – COVID typically has prodrome (vs. flu which has rapid onset)
- Chest X-ray with bilateral infiltrates/ground-glass opacities
- History of international travel or travel to locale in US with community transmission

### Expedited Referral for COVID-19 testing of in-patients

**It is no longer necessary to receive pre-approval to collect specimens and send for testing.**

Please include the testing requisition with the specimen when sending to Public Health.

### Testing Guidelines for providers collecting specimens – In Patient

**Now ONLY 1 NASOPHARYNGEAL SWAB SPECIMEN is required to test for COVID-19**

- An oropharyngeal swab is no longer required.
- Use only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts as they may contain substances that inhibit PCR testing.
- Place nasopharyngeal swab immediately into sterile tube containing 2-3 ml of viral transport media.
- Refrigerate specimens at 2-8° C and ship overnight to testing lab on ice pack.

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#### Public Health Department

2191 Johnson Avenue | San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 | (P) 805-781-5500 | (F) 805-781-5543

[www.slopublichealth.org](http://www.slopublichealth.org)

**Contact the County Public Health Department immediately to report confirmed cases identified through a commercial laboratory:**

- 805-781-5500 (M-F, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.)
- 805-781-4553 (weekends and after hours)

Complete specimen collection and transport instructions are available at:

[www.slocounty.ca.gov/Corona-sars-Cov2-PCR](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Corona-sars-Cov2-PCR)

More information for health care providers is available at

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>.