



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY: OUT-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

We will not accept patients calling and asking to be tested. Please do not ask/tell your patients to call the Public Health Department (PHD).

Appropriately screen individuals prior to out-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)
- 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 (if done)
- History of international travel or travel to locale in US with community transmission

Expedited Referral for COVID-19 out-patient testing

If you feel that a patient needs to be tested for COVID-19, and wish to have the PHD collect the specimen and test, **the County Public Health Department must be contacted prior to the patient coming to the PHD.** When contacting the PHD to refer for testing, you may phone (805) 781-5500 or fax (805) 781-5543 over the following information (instead of phoning):

- Provider referring patient
- Patient name
- Date of Birth
- Symptoms - (MUST include Fever **AND** signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness such as cough or shortness of breath)

Public Health Department

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

www.slopublichealth.org

- Contact information for patient

In all cases, the County Public Health Department must be contacted prior to sending patients or specimens for testing. We are unable at this time to accommodate testing after hours or on weekends.

Testing Guidelines for providers collecting specimens

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.

Please 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.)
- 805-781-4585 (weekends and after hours)

Complete specimen collection and transport instructions are available at:
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>.