



COVID-19 Laboratory Prioritization Advisory - Update
April 20, 2020

Please distribute to all providers in the facility

Go to: <https://tinyurl.com/ShastaCOVID-19> for an electronic version of this Health Alert

Background

There is now clear evidence of community transmission of COVID-19 in Shasta County. Testing for COVID-19 has been mostly at a low level due to lack of testing supplies, however supplies are now readily available at the Shasta County Public Health Laboratory and commercial labs. Although discretion in ordering this test is left to the medical provider, Shasta County Public Health (SCPH) is recommending that patients with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 such as fever, fatigue, dry cough or shortness of breath be tested. Other symptoms to consider include: nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, myalgia and diarrhea. Severe patients develop dyspnea and/or hypoxemia after one week and may progress rapidly.

Actions requested of all clinicians with patients suspected of having COVID-19 infection:

1. **Collect** respiratory specimens: nasopharyngeal (NP) specimens are recommended.¹ For assistance with specimen collection supplies, please email DOC45@co.shasta.ca.us.
2. **Order** influenza testing and/or respiratory panels for suspect COVID-19 patients. Positive influenza or respiratory panel result **DOES NOT** preclude COVID-19 testing.
3. **Tier 1:**
 - a. **Send** specimens along with a completed [Lab Requisition Form](#) to Shasta County Public Health Lab (SCPHL); see address on form.
 - b. Specimens may be **delivered** directly or by courier Monday-Friday 8am-5pm and weekends 9am-10am. To arrange for delivery times outside of these hours call 530-395-0132. For questions about specimen collection supplies or packaging, call the SCPHL at 530-225-5072.
 - c. **Complete** the [COVID-19 Tier 1 Criteria Form](#) on pg. 3 and fax to 530-225-5074 by 10 AM daily.
Specimens received without this corresponding form will be delayed. The form will be reviewed for Tier 1 criteria; specimens that do NOT meet Tier 1 criteria will be returned to medical provider for testing at commercial lab.
 - d. Results are typically available within 2 business days.
4. **Tier 2 and 3:** Send specimens to commercial laboratories (LabCorp or Quest). A PUI number is not required.
5. **Call** ahead to imaging provider when ordering CT or chest X-ray to alert provider of patients' suspected COVID-19 status.
6. **Report** all positive cases to SCPH by phone at (530) 225-5591 AND confidential fax at (530) 225-5074. After hours, call 530-395-0132 to report positive cases.²

¹Acceptable alternatives when NP supplies are limited include oropharyngeal (OP) swabs; and mid-turbinate or anterior nares by onsite self-collection or HCP collection. Multiples specimens may be taken with a single swab and swabs from two anatomic locations may be placed in the same vial. See [FDA FAQ on Diagnostic Testing for SARS-CoV-2](#) and [CDC Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling and Testing Clinical Specimens for COVID-19](#).

²The California Department of Public Health has updated Title 17 Sections 2500 and 2505 of the California Code of Regulations to include COVID-19 on the lists of reportable conditions.



Symptoms

Most patients with confirmed COVID-19 have fever (objective or subjective) and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing).

Who to test: Patients with sign/symptoms compatible with COVID-19 AND one of the priority criteria below:

Priority		Criteria
Tier 1	Shasta County Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with known exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case • Patients who are hospitalized, regardless of age or comorbidities • Health care workers, including emergency medical services (EMS) and other first responders • Individuals with pneumonia • Individuals residing or working in congregate living facilities (e.g. jails, shelters, long-term care facilities)
Tier 2	Commercial Labs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons 60 and older with comorbidities, especially those with cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, chronic respiratory disease, hypertension, and cancer
Tier 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other patients not included in Tier 1 or 2

The Tiers above may change over time. Go to: <https://tinyurl.com/ShastaCOVID-19> for the most current Laboratory Prioritization Advisory.

Resources

1. CDC Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/lab/guidelines-clinical-specimens.html>
2. FDA FAQ on Diagnostic Testing for SARS-CoV-2: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-diagnostic-testing-sars-cov-2>
3. LabCorp: <https://www.labcorp.com/information-labcorp-about-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
4. Quest Diagnostics: <https://www.questdiagnostics.com/home/Covid-19/>



COVID-19 Tier 1 Criteria Form

**Fax this page along with face sheet/demographics and medical records (required) to Shasta County Public Health Communicable Disease Program:
530-225-5074**

Patient Last Name	Patient First Name	Patient Date of Birth
Provider/Clinic Name	Clinic Contact Name and Direct Phone Number	

Symptomatic individuals¹ AND one of the criteria below.

Please check all that apply:

Known exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case

Hospitalized

Hospital: _____ MRN: _____

Health care worker, emergency medical services (EMS), or other first responder

Hospital or agency: _____ City: _____

Individual with pneumonia

Hospital/Facility Name: _____ MRN: _____

Congregate living facility

Facility Name: _____ City: _____

If none of the above, send to commercial lab (LabCorp, Quest, etc.) for testing.

¹COVID-19 symptoms include fever (objective or subjective) and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue)