



COVID-19 Health Advisory #20

July 14, 2021

Please distribute to all providers in the facility

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

The purpose of this health advisory is to provide healthcare providers with information on the following topics:

- Use of eye protection to prevent SARS-CoV-2 transmission in healthcare settings
- Antigen test guidance
- Testing for COVID-19 – [PCR versus Antigen Testing Quick Reference Guide](#)
 - Testing of asymptomatic individuals
 - Testing of symptomatic individuals
- Testing locations
- Reporting of COVID-19 cases

Use of eye protection to prevent SARS-CoV-2 transmission in healthcare settings

During times of “moderate to substantial”¹ community transmission, due to increased likelihood of exposure to asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection, staff working in patient care areas should **wear eye protection** in addition to facemask to ensure the eyes, nose, and mouth are protected from exposure to respiratory secretions during patient care encounters. Please see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) for regular updates to CDC guidance, including a link to a Frequently Asked Questions page about use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).²

Antigen Test guidance

Antigen testing is becoming increasingly popular among providers for ease-of-use and rapid results; however, antigen tests are not as sensitive as molecular/PCR tests and negative results may need to be confirmed with a NAAT/PCR. Antigen tests should be used on symptomatic individuals and using the test on asymptomatic individuals is considered off-label use. The Antigen Testing Guidance, at the link below, includes scenarios in which the SARS-CoV-2 antigen tests might be used along with regulatory requirements and reporting instructions. https://www.co.shasta.ca.us/docs/libraries/hhsa-docs/covid-19/general-antigen-test-guidance.pdf?sfvrsn=32c6f589_0

Testing for COVID-19 – Patients should be instructed to self-quarantine/isolate pending test results.

¹ “Moderate to substantial” transmission may be defined as including sustained transmission with high likelihood or confirmed exposure within communal settings and potential for rapid increase in cases, or large scale, controlled community transmission, including communal settings (e.g., schools, workplaces), or large scale, uncontrolled community transmission. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-mitigation.html>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

Patients should be provided instructions for isolation and quarantine, available at [Shastaready.org](https://shastaready.org) under [“Quarantine and Isolation.”](#) *During surges of high case counts and delays in lab reporting, public health is unable to provide timely education to all COVID-19 cases in our community and appreciates the assistance of providers in doing so.*

A. Testing of *asymptomatic* individuals, including exposed close contacts and essential workers

Testing of asymptomatic individuals is recommended for those who have had close contact (less than 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more) with an individual with documented SARS-CoV-2 infection.

- Testing should be done with an RT-PCR test (not antigen test) preferably 5-8 days after the close contact. Testing in the first few days after exposure in asymptomatic persons is unlikely to show positive results.
- Persons pending test results should self-quarantine at home and stay separated from household members to the greatest extent possible and use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- A single negative test does not mean an individual will remain negative at any time point after that test.
- Even after a negative test, exposed individuals should continue to self-quarantine for 14 days after exposure.

Healthcare providers in close contact with a person with documented SARS-CoV-2 infection while using recommended personal protective equipment do *not* need to be tested.

Testing may be advised in persons in a high SARS-CoV-2 transmission zone and who attended a public or private gathering of more than 10 people (without universal mask wearing and/or physical distancing).

Staff and residents of nursing homes will need testing as part of the facility’s testing plan. Critical infrastructure workers, healthcare workers, or first responders may need to get tested according to their employer’s guidelines.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html>

B. Testing of *symptomatic* individuals

For persons who develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the 3 months after the date of initial symptom onset, if an alternative etiology cannot be identified by a provider, then the person may warrant retesting. Consultation with infectious disease or infection control experts is recommended, especially in the event symptoms develop within 14 days after close contact with an infected person. Individuals should self-isolate while awaiting test results and **should not return to work or school** until results are received.

Testing locations

The Shasta County Testing Task Force is working to build provider capacity to collect samples and submit for testing in a commercial or public health lab. Additionally, BinaxNOW antigen tests, guidance below, are available for distribution to medical providers in Shasta County for point-of-care testing.

- For providers who are interested in assistance with supplies and training to begin testing in their own office, please email doc45@co.shasta.ca.us to inquire about support.
- For providers who are unable to test in their own facility, a list of options to access testing can be found at <https://www.co.shasta.ca.us/ready/covid-19/get-tested>. Check back for additional state testing options later this month including a second fixed site, regionally based traveling teams and Color test kits for employer supervised self-collection.
- BinaxNOW guidance found here https://www.co.shasta.ca.us/docs/libraries/hhsa-docs/covid-19/recommendations-for-use-of-abbott-binax-now-antigen-tests-pdf-11-18-20.pdf?sfvrsn=cc6f589_0

Reporting of COVID-19 cases

Per Title 17 California Code of Regulations, § 2500 and § 2505, COVID-19 cases must be reported by both the diagnosing medical provider *and* the laboratory performing a COVID-19 diagnostic test. Delays in provider reporting of patient contact, demographic and congregate setting information prevent timely follow-up and prioritization of high-risk individuals.

Medical providers may report new diagnoses by one of two methods:

Fax a [COVID-19 Confidential Morbidity Report](#) to 530-229-8301.

- **Submit** an electronic report via the CalREDIE Provider Portal. The Provider Portal secure access for healthcare providers to electronically submit Confidential Morbidity Reports (CMRs), required by California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 17, Section 2500 directly to Local Health Departments (LHD). This method may be used to submit electronic reports for other diseases in addition to COVID-19. To request an account, please complete and email [an account request form](#) to CDunit@co.shasta.ca.us. For more information about the CalREDIE Provider Portal, please visit [this link](#).

Test results may be reported by one of three methods:

- **High Complexity Laboratories:** Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) to CalREDIE is preferred.
- **CLIA waived facilities:** the CalREDIE Lab Reporting Module is the preferred method of reporting. Recipients of BinaxNOW Ag Cards from Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency **MUST** use this reporting method. Instructions for access are available at the following link: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CalREDIE_Manual_Laboratory_Reporting_Module.pdf

Alternatively, a lab report may be **faxed** to 530-229-8301.

Note: Medical providers reporting point-of-care test results should also fax a [COVID-19 Confidential Morbidity Report](#) or make a report through the Provider Portal.