



PUBLIC HEALTH BRANCH
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PROVIDER ALERT

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING OPTIONS

Diagnostic testing for COVID-19 is expanding, with more options available to local providers. Because of regional differences in testing availability, the California Department of Public Health does not address which laboratory setting/test might be most appropriate for various clinical scenarios. Recommendations from Humboldt County Public Health are outlined below:

1) **The Humboldt County Public Health Lab (HCPHL):**

HCPHL continues to have the fastest turnaround time for COVID-19 testing locally. Results are available within 48-72 hours, but are often available sooner, depending on current demand for testing.

Testing through HCPHL will prioritize:

- Hospitalized patients
- Any individual with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, especially symptomatic healthcare workers, first responders, and other social service employees as well as those working or residing in congregate settings
- Symptomatic persons ≥ 65 years of age OR any age with chronic medical conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID-19 illness
- Test-based clearance of COVID patients, if elected by facility, for transfer to a congregate setting. This will be done at HCPHL as capacity allows.
- Providers who would like to have their patient tested through HCPHL who are not in a category above, may call 707-268-2182 to review with Communicable Disease staff.

2) **Optum Site: An information sheet on the new Humboldt Optum site is included for reference.**

The Optum testing site collects NP swabs, sends to a high throughput lab and forwards results to Public Health. Turnaround times are estimated to be within 48-72 hours, but that will be monitored over time as there is increased demand on their testing capacity. The site can test 132 people per day over a 12 hour period which will substantially increase testing in our county. Test results at this time are not reported directly back to providers, but we have asked Optum to develop this capacity.

Testing through Optum is best for:

- Mildly symptomatic (those who would not normally seek medical care) and asymptomatic individuals, regardless of insurance status or medical home.
 - Asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic individuals should schedule online (see attached info sheet for details).
 - Symptomatic individuals who are high risk by profession or by age/health status, should contact their provider (or public health if they do not have a provider) regarding appropriate testing site
- Please note that asymptomatic surveillance testing more frequently than every 14 days is not advised.





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3) Direct Submission to Commercial Labs:

This is available as before and should be used for lower risk individuals **not mentioned above**, to allow the public health laboratory to provide fast result times for higher risk patients. Commercial labs are best for testing situations where faster turnaround time is not critical and for other scenarios not outlined in this document such as providers electing to do repeated testing on the same patient.

4) Rapid Point of Care testing (Abbot ID Now):

This rapid PCR test is available now in some hospital and outpatient labs.

Rapid testing is best used for:

- Individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 early in their course
- It is important to remember that the sensitivity of this test is less than that of the PCR testing offered through HCPHL and commercial labs; it should not be used for asymptomatic patients or for clearing patients at the end of their course such as for transfer to a congregate setting.
- It is mandatory that positive results are reported to Public Health at 268-2182 during business hours or by calling Health Officer after hours and on weekends through Sheriff Dispatch @ 445-7319

5) Other tests:

There are many tests flooding the market. Please go to the FDA FAQ site on diagnostic testing for up to date information on approved tests.

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-diagnostic-testing-sars-cov-2>

SEROLOGY TESTING: Will be addressed in a second provider alert

CDPH Testing PRIORITIZATION: Is expected to change weekly. The most recent guidance from California can be found at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx>. While there will continue to be more specific regional guidance regarding use of available testing services, Humboldt County Public Health will generally follow California's testing guidance.

CLEARING PATIENTS FROM ISOLATION AFTER COVID-19 INFECTION:

Guidance in this area has been evolving. CDPH is currently recommending that patients may be taken out of isolation in their home setting (or upon discharge to home setting) by using symptom-based criteria which includes:

- Absence of fever for at least 3 days without use of antipyretics
- Improvement in symptoms'
- It has been at least **10 days** since onset of symptoms (changed from 7 days)

Individuals who are going to high risk congregate settings may be cleared by the symptom-based criteria above or by laboratory criteria.

It is important to remember that PCR testing for clearance does not distinguish between infectious versus non-infectious virus...it simply tests for the presence of genetic material.

