



Chester County Health Department – 6/25/20

Chester County Health Department (CCHD), supporting both Chester County and Delaware County in COVID-19 response, is sharing the following information to healthcare providers on: **Molecular Testing for COVID-19.**

Molecular (PCR) Testing

Over the past few months, the availability of molecular (PCR) testing for COVID-19 has increased. As Chester County and Delaware County move into the green phase, CCHD is emphasizing the importance of diagnostic testing, contact tracing, and isolation and quarantine measures in order to control transmission of COVID-19 and to detect any potential increase in cases. We encourage everyone who has symptoms or exposure, even if asymptomatic, to get tested.

Testing should be used in conjunction with clinical criteria, epidemiologic links, and other laboratory and radiologic evidence to make a diagnosis of COVID-19. A negative test result does not preclude infection; PCR testing has documented risk of false negatives. In addition, any testing during the incubation period will be negative. A negative test within 14 days after known exposure does not mean a patient may be released from quarantine, as they might be in the incubation period. False positives have only occurred in the setting of laboratory error; never assume that a positive result is a false positive, even if the patient has no symptoms, no known exposure, or has a subsequent test which is negative.

Testing is available in many locations throughout both counties and through several different sources. Some locations require a referral/prescription; some locations require an appointment. All testing is subject to change. Please check the details using the links below before you refer patients.

- Chester County is offering testing at various locations in the county. For information on locations, dates, eligibility, and registration, visit <https://www.chesco.org/4460/Coronavirus-COVID-19-Testing-Information>
- Delaware County is offering testing at various locations in the county. For information on locations, dates, eligibility, and registration, visit <http://delcopa.gov/ich/resources/covid19/testing.html>
- All hospitals in both counties continue to test patients with suspected COVID-19 in emergency departments and inpatient locations. As always, please discourage patients from visiting an ED solely for the purpose of testing.
- Many hospital systems continue to offer physician-referral testing. Please contact the system with whom you are affiliated for up-to-date information on testing locations and procedures.

- An increasing number of urgent care centers and outpatient medical practices, including Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), offer testing. Call the location directly for details.
- Numerous CVS and Rite Aid pharmacy locations offer drive-through testing for those age 18 and older. No referral is needed. For details and locations, visit <https://www.cvs.com/minuteclinic/covid-19-testing> or <https://www.riteaid.com/pharmacy/services/covid-19-testing>.
- At-home testing is offered through Pixel. For details, visit <https://www.pixel.labcorp.com/at-home-test-kits/covid-19-test>

Specimen Collection

Commercial laboratories are not performing specimen collection.

Acceptable specimens include:

- A nasopharyngeal (NP) specimen collected by a healthcare provider
- An oropharyngeal (OP) specimen collected by a healthcare provider
- A nasal mid-turbinate swab collected by a healthcare provider or by a supervised onsite self-collection
- An anterior nares (nasal swab) specimen collected by a healthcare provider or by onsite or home self-collection
- Nasopharyngeal wash/aspirate or nasal wash/aspirate (NW) specimen collected by a healthcare provider
- Lower respiratory tract samples from hospitalized patients (sputum, tracheal aspirate, bronchoalveolar lavage)

Different swab types and transport media are available. Each laboratory will only accept certain specimen types, swabs, and transport media. Verify the combinations accepted by your laboratory prior to collecting any specimens.

If you are performing specimen collection within 6 feet of a patient, recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) includes N95 respirator or equivalent, eye protection, gown, and gloves.

If you are witnessing self-collection from a distance of 6 feet, recommended PPE includes facemask (universal masking) and gloves (for handling the specimen container).

Please distribute this health alert as appropriate.