

ALAMEDA COUNTY HEALTH UPDATE

Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance for Alameda County - 5/12/20

The following updated guidance for COVID-19 laboratory testing is intended to inform Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) efforts to control the epidemic and aid decision-making by clinicians and other testing providers. The guidance sets out groups that should be prioritized for testing but it is not a requirement to test in these groups. Testing decisions and policies must be flexible to account for ongoing limitations in testing resources and protective equipment. Clinical judgment should be used to guide testing of symptomatic persons. ACPHD typically issues additional testing guidance for certain settings and situations, including outbreaks.

Please also refer to California Department of Public Health (CDPH) testing guidance in the [All Facilities Letter 20-44.1](#) updated on May 2, 2020 and the [CDC testing guidance](#) updated on May 3, 2020.

Actions Requested of Clinicians

Clinicians are encouraged to test¹ for COVID-19 in:

- Hospitalized patients
- Healthcare workers seeing patients, first responders, and other essential service workers
- Persons with [COVID-19 symptoms](#) who are ≥65 years of age OR have chronic medical conditions² that increase the risk for severe disease
- Persons identified for testing by ACPHD case, contact and cluster or outbreak investigations
- Persons with [COVID-19 symptoms](#) residing in congregate settings³
- Asymptomatic persons residing or working in congregate settings in certain situations:
 - If results can be used to inform outbreak response, infection control efforts, resident placement, staff and resident cohorting, and continuity of care when residents are transferred or discharged
 - Screening before or at admission may be considered if information can be used for cohorting

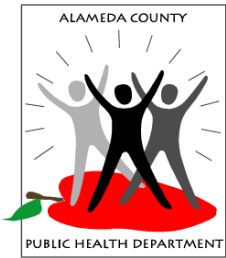
Persons under 65 not meeting the above criteria who are otherwise healthy and experiencing mild symptoms should be tested as resources permit and according to clinical judgment. Alameda County is working to expand access to COVID-19 testing in communities disproportionately impacted by the epidemic.

Routine clinical testing of asymptomatic persons not in a priority group and without suspected exposure to COVID-19 is not recommended, although such testing may be done for research or surveillance purposes.

¹ Diagnostic testing for COVID-19 should be done using an FDA-approved or FDA-EUA test for viral RNA or antigen

² Refer to CDC guidance for [People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness](#) for a list of chronic medical conditions

³ Congregate settings include but are not limited to licensed skilled nursing and residential care facilities, correctional facilities, shelters and some encampments for unhoused persons, board and care homes, and similar settings



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All testing providers should have plans to disclose test results, link persons to appropriate care, and report cases to the Alameda County Public Health Department or the health jurisdiction of residence. According to state regulation,⁴ race and ethnicity information must be included when reporting cases.

Results from serologic tests for COVID-19 should be interpreted with caution in the clinical setting. In general, they should not be used for acute diagnosis of COVID-19 disease or to infer immunity to SARS-CoV-2. Molecular testing should be used to make a diagnosis when acute cases of COVID-19 are suspected. Serologic testing for diagnosis of acute COVID-19 infection is not currently recommended.

Local Health Department Contact Information

- Alameda County Acute Communicable Disease Control:
 - Weekdays 8:30AM – 5PM Phone: (510) 267–3250
 - After-Hours Phone: (925) 422–7595 and ask for the public health duty officer on call
 - For non-immediate concerns, email nCoV@acgov.org
- Berkeley Public Health Division:
 - Weekdays 8AM – 5PM Phone: (510) 981–5292
 - After-Hours Phone: (510) 981–5911 and ask for the Health Officer on call
- [Contact Information for all other Local Health Jurisdictions](#) is available online from CDPH

Resources

- [ACPHD Clinician Testing Guidance](#)
- [ACPHD Testing Resources for the Community](#)
- [Reporting a COVID-19 Case to ACPHD](#)
- [Blanket Isolation and Quarantine Orders](#)

⁴ Health & Safety Code, Title 17, Section 2500 specifies required information to be reported. See the [March 30, 2020 Alameda County Public Health Department COVID-19 Testing Sites Requirement](#).