

**ORANGE COUNTY OPERATIONAL AREA**  
**EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PRESS RELEASE # 018**

Date: 3-21-20 Time: 13:20 hours

**COVID-19 TESTING AVAILABILITY**

Testing for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is now available in a number of public health, commercial and hospital laboratories in California, however broad scale testing is not available.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has provided guidance for prioritizing testing based on medical need. Testing based on medical need will ensure that people who most need testing can get results rapidly and will reduce strain on the health care system.

CDPH guidelines for persons who may be considered for testing depending on clinical severity and community health relevance include:

1. Hospitalized patients who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 in order to inform decisions related to infection control or medical management.
2. Residents and staff of long-term care facilities with signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19.
3. Other persons who are at higher risk for severe infection with signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19. These persons include older adults (age  $\geq 65$  years) and individuals with chronic medical conditions.
4. Residents and staff of correctional facilities and other congregate settings with signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19.
5. Healthcare personnel with signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19.

Persons in these categories with mild illness should contact their health care provider by phone to discuss the need for testing.

Release authorized by Board of Supervisors: \_\_\_\_\_

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Sent by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

MARCH 21, 2020

Persons with mild respiratory symptoms who do not otherwise need medical care and who are not in one of the above groups should not be routinely tested for COVID-19. These persons should care for themselves at home as they normally would for a mild illness.

In addition, ill persons should stay home and away from others until there has been no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, there has been improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) for at least 3 days; AND it is at least 7 days since symptoms first appeared, i.e., the minimum length of time will be 7 days.

Asymptomatic persons should not be tested for COVID-19. Current testing for COVID-19 cannot detect prior infection. Testing a person without symptoms does not rule out the possibility that person may become ill in the future.

As always, consult your healthcare provider for personal medical advice.

For general information about COVID-19, please call the OC Health Care Agency's (HCA) Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448, visit <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/novelcoronavirus>, or follow the HCA on Facebook (@ochealthinfo) and Twitter (@ochealth).

For non-medical questions, contact the County of Orange Public Information Hotline at (714) 628-7085.

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