

Commercial Testing for COVID-19 Now Available

Physicians and other healthcare providers can now order a 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) test through a commercial laboratory for patients who are ill with signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19, but do not meet the Maricopa County Public Health testing criteria for testing at the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory. **Individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should see a healthcare provider. DO NOT go to LabCorp or Sonora Quest Laboratory.**

The test detects the presence of the virus that causes COVID-19 and is for use with patients who have signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19. For additional information on COVID-19, please refer to CDC website, which is [available here](#).

Starting Monday, 3/9/2020, commercial laboratory testing is available at:

- LabCorp
<https://www.labcorp.com/information-labcorp-about-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Starting Wednesday, 3/11/2020, commercial laboratory testing is available at:

- Sonora Quest Laboratories
<https://www.sonoraquest.com/our-response-to-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/>

Clinicians & laboratorians SHOULD NOT call Public Health to coordinate Commercial Testing for COVID-19.

Do not mail specimens to ASPHL.

**Patients: Please do not go to LabCorp or Sonora Quest Laboratories for COVID-19 testing.
Patients cannot order this test directly.
Contact your healthcare provider for information about testing.**

Infection Control Precautions

What precautions should healthcare providers use with persons under investigation for COVID-19?

When in a room with a patient with, or suspected to have, COVID-19, and NO aerosol-generating procedures are being performed (e.g., suctioning, intubation, CPAP/BiPAP), all healthcare personnel should wear:

- Surgical (medical) mask • Gown • Gloves • Eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield) •

Additional infection control for healthcare providers available here: <https://www.maricopa.gov/5491/Healthcare-Provider-Guidance>

Do patients need to stay in standard, contact precautions with eye protection while waiting for test results?

Yes, individuals with symptoms need to remain in these precautions as long as they have symptoms. Discharged patients should be instructed to remain home while ill.

Specimen Collection by Healthcare Provider – NO COLLECTION AT COMMERCIAL LABORATORY

All specimens must be obtained by a clinician.

Commercial labs do not currently collect specimens for COVID-19 testing. Patients for whom testing has been ordered should not be sent to a commercial laboratory location to have a specimen collected.

What specimens will be acceptable for testing?

- Preferred sample:
 - **Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab in viral transport medium (VTM)**
- Acceptable samples:
 - Oropharyngeal (OP) swab in viral transport medium (VTM)
 - Oropharyngeal (OP) aspirate or washing submitted in a sterile, leak-proof, screw cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container
 - Nasopharyngeal (NP) aspirate or washing submitted in a sterile, leak-proof, screw cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container
 - Bronchoalveolar lavage (BAL) or bronchial wash, 2-3 mL collected into a sterile, leak-proof, screw cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container

How do I collect specimens?

- LabCorp has specified the use of only synthetic fiber swabs with plastic shafts. Do not use calcium alginate swabs or swabs with wooden shafts, as they may contain substances that inactivate some viruses and inhibit PCR testing. Place swabs immediately into sterile tubes containing 2-3 L of viral transport media. NP and OP specimens may be kept in separate vials or combined at collection into a single vial.

Sonora Quest Laboratories has requested the use of sterile Dacron or Rayon swabs in M4, VCM, or UTM media. Nasopharyngeal and/or oropharyngeal swabs can now be collected and transported in their own vial, or combined in a single vial for testing. Each vial collected should be ordered on a separate requisition and transported in its own sealed bag. Do not use calcium alginate as they may contain substances that inhibit PCR testing. Wooden shaft swabs, Eswabs, and swabs transported in Amies liquid or gel transport must not be used.

- **Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab:** Insert a swab into the nostril parallel to the palate. Leave the swab in place for a few seconds to absorb secretions.
- **Oropharyngeal (OP) swab (e.g., throat swab):** Swab the posterior pharynx, avoiding the tongue.
- **Nasopharyngeal wash / aspirate or nasal aspirate:** Collect 2-3 mL into a sterile, leak-proof, screw-cap sputum collection cup or sterile dry container.

Specimen Labeling, Storage & Shipping

Labeling

Label each specimen container with the patient's ID number (e.g., medical record number), unique specimen ID (e.g., laboratory requisition number), specimen type (e.g., OP) and the date the sample was collected.

Storage & Shipping

The preferred method of shipment is frozen samples; however, samples can be shipped refrigerated at 2-8°C and are stable at this temperature up to 72 hours. Specimens should be shipped overnight to the laboratory according to standard operating procedures.

Send-outs for Healthcare Providers Only – Patients Cannot Directly Order Tests

All specimens going to a commercial laboratory need to be coordinated by the healthcare provider. Healthcare providers should work within their own healthcare facility to coordinate laboratory send-outs.

Public Health will not be involved in coordinating the send-out.

How may I order a commercial laboratory test?

- LabCorp
 - Test Code: 139900 <https://www.labcorp.com/tests/139900/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-naa>
- Sonora Quest Laboratory
 - Test Code: 907078 <https://www.sonoraquest.com/covid-19-information-for-healthcare-providers/>

Estimated Turnaround Time

What is the turnaround time for LabCorp and Sonora Quest Laboratories COVID-19 testing?

LabCorp is reporting a 3-4 day turnaround time. Sonora Quest Laboratories is reporting a 5-6 day turnaround time.

Turnaround time is defined as the usual number of days from the date of pickup of a specimen for testing to when the result is released to the ordering provider. In some cases, additional time should be allowed for additional confirmatory or additional reflex tests. Testing schedules may vary.

The labs will be operating 7 days a week.

Laboratory Results

Will commercial lab testing be considered confirmatory or presumptive?

- Right now, commercial testing will be considered presumptive positive, and patients should be managed as if they are positive. The test will have to be confirmed by the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory.

Does a negative result from LabCorp's test for COVID-19 mean that a patient is definitely not infected?

- Not necessarily. LabCorp's COVID-19 assay detects the virus directly, within the established limits of detection for which it was validated. However, a negative result does not definitely rule out infection. As with any test, the accuracy relies on many factors:
 - The test might not detect virus in an infected patient if the virus is not being actively shed at the time or site of sample collection
 - The amount of time an individual was exposed prior to the collection of the specimen can also influence whether the test will detect the virus
 - Individual response to the virus can differ
 - Whether the specimen we receive was collected properly, sent promptly, and package correctly

Guidance for Laboratorians

Please see the CDC website for interim guidance and resources for laboratory professions working with specimens from persons under investigation for COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/index.html>

Additional Resources

- Q&A | LabCorp 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), NAA Test [139900]
<https://www.labcorp.com/assets-media/2330>
- Specimen Collection and Shipping Instructions
<https://www.labcorp.com/assets-media/2331>
- Sonora Quest Laboratory Website
<https://www.sonoraquest.com/our-response-to-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/>