

COVID-19 Testing Strategy for Practices

Developing a strategy for COVID-19 testing is critical to re-opening your practice. While the availability of testing varies depending on your region, it is important for you to have a plan in place to safely resume care while managing potentially limited testing capability. The following tips are designed to help your practice develop an approach to COVID-19 testing:

Coordinating Community Testing for COVID-19

If you have limited testing capability in your practice, or if you are concerned about the infection control challenges of offering testing in your practice, consider coordinating with local and community testing sites in your region.

- Tips for coordinating testing outside of your practice
 - ☑ Assign a member of the team who will be responsible for contacting testing sites to ensure they are open and to keep track of their requirements
 - ☑ Create a directory/contact list for available testing sites in your region
 - ☑ Prior to sending a patient out for testing, contact the testing site to ensure availability of testing and site requirements (e.g., appointment only, drive through only, etc.)
 - ☑ Ask the testing site for anticipated timeline for receiving test results
 - ☑ Provide patient with key information about testing site, including:
 - Address
 - Contact information
 - Expected timeline for receiving results
 - Any site-specific information or instructions (e.g., what to bring)
- How to find local testing sites
 - ☑ Contact your [state](#) or [local](#) health department for testing options in your community or to coordinate testing with [public health laboratories](#)
 - ☑ Contact local hospitals or community health centers
 - ☑ Reach out to pharmacies (e.g., [CVS](#))
 - ☑ Identify if your community is hosting any drive-through COVID testing sites – [Drive-through COVID Test Site Directory \(GoodRx\)](#)

COVID-19 Testing in Your Practice

If you choose to administer COVID-19 tests in your practice, it is important to understand your practice's capability for testing (e.g., how many tests can you conduct per day) and develop a strategy for administering tests in your practice.

- Tips for COVID-19 testing in your practice
 - ☑ Establish a plan for prioritizing administering tests in your practice versus coordinating with external testing sites (based on your state or local health department's guidance and your practice's infection control plan)
 - ☑ Follow [CDC Guidelines for handling clinical specimen](#)
 - ☑ Educate patients on what to expect when they get tested (specimen collection, false negative rates, test turnaround time, self-isolation instructions and how they will be notified of results)

- ☑ In consultation with state or local health department staff, identify alternatives to self-isolation at home for patients who are unable to do so safely while awaiting confirmation of diagnosis, or after diagnosis.
- ☑ Develop a communication plan for notifying patients of test results
- ☑ Notify local or state public health department as appropriate
- ☑ Use strict infection control protocols for testing- limit testing while non-COVID patients are in the office, use appropriate PPE for staff and patients

COVID-19 Testing Criteria

Stay abreast of the rapidly changing criteria for COVID-19 testing in your region. While national guidance from ACP and the CDC are available, your practice should coordinate with your local and state health departments and use your own clinical judgement to determine when it is appropriate to test patients for COVID-19.

- [ACP Recommendations](#)
 - **Priority Level 1: Testing All Symptomatic Individuals and Close Contacts (Molecular Testing)** - test all symptomatic patients and close contacts of confirmed patients using a free, readily available, rapid, and reliable molecular (diagnostic) test with a high sensitivity and specificity for COVID-19 with a streamlined and easy sample collection. Special attention needs to be paid to communities with high health care disparities.
 - **Priority Level 2: Screening All Asymptomatic, High-Risk Population (Molecular Testing)** - screen high-risk asymptomatic populations with targeted approaches that are tailored to the community's specific demographics, economy, and infrastructure. High-risk populations should generally be defined as those with a high risk of transmission. Communities should roll out screening to more asymptomatic populations as resources allow, with the ultimate goal of gradually screening the general population.
 - **Priority Level 3: Surveillance (Antibody Testing)** - surveillance of communities using a reliable immunologic (antibody) or serologic tests to track the incidence, prevalence, and transmission of SARS-CoV2. This will help to track presumptive immunity and prevalence and to inform vaccine development.
- [National Testing Guidance from the CDC](#)
 - **Priority 1:** Ensure optimal care options for all hospitalized patients, lessen the risk of nosocomial infections, and maintain the integrity of the healthcare system
 - Hospitalized patients
 - Symptomatic healthcare workers
 - **Priority 2:** Ensure that those who are at highest risk of complication of infection are rapidly identified and appropriately triaged
 - Patients in long-term care facilities with symptoms
 - Patients 65 years of age and older with symptoms
 - Patients with underlying conditions with symptoms
 - First responders with symptoms

- **Priority 3:** As resources allow, test individuals in the surrounding community of rapidly increasing hospital cases to decrease community spread, and ensure health of essential workers
 - Critical infrastructure workers with symptoms
 - Individuals who do not meet any of the above categories with symptoms
 - Health care workers and first responders
 - Individuals with mild symptoms in communities experiencing high COVID-19 hospitalizations
- Look up your state or local health department's website to understand local testing criteria in your community:
 - [State Health Department Website Directory](#)
 - [Local Health Department Website Directory](#)