



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

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Updated Guidance Regarding COVID-19 Testing and Clinical Presentation

As the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved, the clinical presentation of the disease has become clearer. Commercial testing has taken over the majority of COVID-19 testing within our county, and there are a multitude of available testing locations covering most geographic areas.

With these facts in mind, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department has broadened its clinical criteria to increase the number of individuals who should be considered appropriate for testing, and we encourage other healthcare providers to do the same.

Consistent with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Public Health Department no longer requires screening for other viral respiratory illnesses prior to testing for COVID-19. Also know that all local healthcare workers are included in the priority group for testing by the Public Health Laboratory. Please fax a completed COVID-19 testing referral form to schedule swabbing and testing through the Public Health Department 1-805-781-5543. The form can be found at the following link: <https://www.prepareslo.org/en/resources/COVID-Testing-Referral-Form-Updated.pdf>

Clinical presentation

- The median incubation period for COVID-19 is 4-5 days. 97.5% of people who develop symptoms do so within 12 days of infection.
- Fever is the most common symptom associated with COVID-19, but frequently occurs later in the disease course and may not be as high as 100.4° F.
- Other common symptoms include cough, fatigue, and anorexia.
- Symptoms occurring in fewer than half of COVID-19 patients include shortness of breath, sputum production, and myalgias.
- Headache, confusion, rhinorrhea, sore throat, hemoptysis, vomiting, diarrhea, and anosmia have all been reported, but occur in less than 10% of patients. In some individuals, gastrointestinal symptoms have preceded onset of fever and respiratory symptoms.
- It is not unusual to see rapid deterioration in patients one week after illness onset. In those individuals who experience acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), median time from symptom onset is 8-12 days.

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Testing

- A nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport media is the preferred specimen for testing. Detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA is better in nasopharyngeal samples as compared to oropharyngeal samples.
- Providers should consider testing any person for COVID-19 who fits the clinical presentation described here.

References

Interim Clinical Guidance for Management of Patients with Confirmed Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). CDC. March 30, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html>