MIDDLETOWN

Updated COVID-19 Testing Guidance April 22, 2020

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On April 22, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) updated COVID-19 testing guidance. This guidance applies to all COVID-19 testing in the State of Ohio.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has established priority groups for testing. Ohio has modified these groups to meet the specific needs of our state in light of changes in testing availability and evolving knowledge of COVID-19 and its impact on Ohioans. The state continues to emphasize testing of patients who are most severely ill, patients who are moderately ill with a high risk of complications — such as those who are elderly and those with serious medical issues — and individuals who are critical to providing care and service to those who are ill. Expanded test availability will allow individuals in lower risk tiers to be tested and help to further contain and respond to COVID-19 in Ohio.

Priority 1 is to ensure optimal care options for all hospitalized patients, lessen the risk of hospital-incurred infections, and maintain the integrity of the healthcare system. This includes testing for:

- Hospitalized patients with symptoms.
- Healthcare workers with symptoms. This includes behavioral health providers, home health workers, nursing facility employees, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and others rendering care in any setting.

Priority 2 is to ensure that people at highest risk of complications from COVID-19 are rapidly identified and appropriately prioritized. This includes testing for:

- Residents of long-term care facilities and other congregate living settings identified in Priority 2a below with symptoms.
- First responders and critical infrastructure with symptoms.
- Patients 65 years of age and older with symptoms.
- Patients with underlying conditions with symptoms.

Priority 2a—Enhanced Congregate Living Assessment: In the context of an outbreak (2 or more cases in the same wing) in a long-term care facility or other congregate living setting:

- Asymptomatic exposed residents and staff in congregate settings with known COVID exposure to identify infected individuals without symptoms and permit more specific cohorting and isolating of residents and staff.
  - **NOTE: An exposed but asymptomatic individual who tests negative still must be quarantined for 14 days, as she/he could test positive later during the 14-day incubation period.**
- Congregate living setting includes but is not limited to assisted living or nursing facilities, substance use residential facilities, facilities serving individuals with developmental disabilities, homeless shelters and other residential treatment facilities.
- Testing does not replace comprehensive infection control and prevention activities.

Priority 3: As resources allow, test individuals in the surrounding community to decrease community spread, and ensure health of other essential workers:

- Individuals with symptoms who do not meet any of the above categories with symptoms.
- Individuals with mild symptoms in communities experiencing high numbers of COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Non-priority: Asymptomatic individuals not mentioned above.

<mark>All providers are expected to adhere to these priorities. Testing must be first available to the Priorities 1, 2 and then 2a</mark> to assure testing for the most ill and vulnerable Ohioans and those who care for them. Priority 3 may be tested when testing resources are available to fully meet the needs of the higher priority groups.

Providers should work with their regional hospital leads on issues related to testing and use hospital labs and private labs primarily. The regional leads will be assessing laboratory capacity and assessing supplies on hand to ensure each region is maximizing their testing capacity. All specimens referred to ODH lab require approval of the ODH Bureau of Infectious Diseases for processing.

COVID-19 Testing in Ohio
Help prevent the spread of COVID-19

Priority 1	**Individuals with symptoms who are:** • Hospitalized. • Healthcare workers.
Priority 2	**Individuals with symptoms who are:** • In long-term care/congregate living facilities. • First responders/critical infrastructure workers. • 65 and older. • Living with underlying conditions.
Priority 2a	**Individuals and staff without symptoms who are:** • In long-term care/congregate living facilities with an outbreak.
Priority 3	• Other individuals with symptoms. • Individuals with mild symptoms in areas with high COVID-19 hospitalizations.

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Priority 1

Individuals with symptoms who are:

- Hospitalized.
- Healthcare workers.

Priority 2

Individuals with symptoms who are:

- In long-term care/congregate living facilities.
- First responders/critical infrastructure workers.
- 65 and older.
- Living with underlying conditions.

Priority 2a

Individuals and staff without symptoms who are:

- In long-term care/congregate living facilities with an outbreak.

Priority 3:

- Other individuals with symptoms.
- Individuals with mild symptoms in areas with high COVID-19 hospitalizations.