

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
Alabama Emergency Response Technology (ALERT) Health Alert Network (HAN)
March 23, 2020
SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Testing Criteria Revised

URGENT UPDATE: Changes to Testing Criteria to Focus Testing on Patients Most at Risk

On March 13, 2020, testing criteria for COVID-19 was revised to allow for testing simply based on a physician order. Since then, the recommendation at the federal level has been updated. The Alabama Department of Public Health's (ADPH) criteria is being revised to reflect the recommendation to focus on those with symptoms who are most at risk: those hospitalized, health care workers, persons in long-term care facilities, those ≥65 years old, and persons who have co-morbidities, and the immunocompromised.

Persons with no symptoms should not be tested. Testing is also not recommended for persons with mild symptoms. Please direct patients to stay home, practice home care, and call if symptoms worsen. All persons are asked to practice social distancing and to limit social interactions.

All providers requesting COVID-19 testing must complete the online Novel Coronavirus PUI form found on the ADPH Coronavirus for Healthcare Providers webpage at <https://epiweb.adph.state.al.us/redcap/surveys/?s=TATDDJ8Y88>. Providers should select the category of the laboratory where the specimen will be sent for testing: Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL), commercial, or clinical laboratory on the form. An email confirming successful submission of the form will be sent. If BCL is selected, the email will include confirmation or declination of approval for testing. Once approved, the email includes a link to the BCL requisition form which must accompany the specimen. Follow specimen collection and shipping instructions carefully <http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/assets/cov-bcl-testing.pdf>.

The Bureau of Clinical Laboratories (BCL) provides free access to the BCL Web Portal. The BCL Web Portal is an electronic system for ordering and receiving laboratory test results. BCL recommends all providers use its Web Portal to assist submitting all test requisitions and for receiving all test results in a timely manner. To register for a Web Portal account, using your work email address, please email the following information to limssupport@adph.state.al.us:

- Facility name
- Facility address
- Facility phone number
- Point of contact

Tests to be performed by the BCL must meet the following criteria:

- The patient is **symptomatic** with at minimum (measured or subjective **fever OR cough OR shortness of breath, and**
- The patient is **hospitalized, or**
- The patient is **immunocompromised or has co-morbidities, or**
- The patient **age 65 years or older, or**
- The patient is a **healthcare worker, or**
- The patient is associated with a **long-term healthcare facility**

Please visit <http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/cov-healthcare.html> for the most current information on COVID-19 reporting and testing.