There are currently no restrictions on who can be tested for COVID-19 and commercial testing is becoming widely available. Healthcare providers may test any patient in whom they suspect COVID-19.

Though testing may not change clinical management, knowing patients’ COVID-19 status will help public health track COVID-19 and better respond to the outbreak.

The following patients with COVID-19 symptoms are considered at highest priority for testing:
- Healthcare workers
- Patients in other public safety occupations (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter, EMS)
- Patients involved in an illness cluster in a facility or institution (e.g., healthcare, school, corrections, shelters)
- Patients with severe lower respiratory illness (hospitalized or fatal)
- Patients older than 60 years
- Patients with underlying medical conditions
- Pregnant women
- Patients with worsening symptoms

In general, we do not recommend testing asymptomatic persons. However, you can consider testing asymptomatic persons if they have been in close contact with a confirmed case. A negative test result does not rule out an infection.

If COVID-19 is being considered, whether testing or not, please provide patients with the following guidance documents so that they know how to best prevent the spread of infection to other people, and to minimize phone calls to your office and to public health.
- Patients with confirmed or suspected COVID-19
- Patients who were exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case
- Unexposed patients with COVID-19 symptoms

See the DOH website for other resources: https://www.doh.wa.gov/

Testing at Commercial Laboratories

In general, healthcare providers should send specimens for COVID-19 testing to commercial laboratories. Please see each laboratory’s test menu for specimen collection instructions, submission forms, and shipping requirements. Please be sure to include the patient’s name, date of birth, address and phone number. The Washington State Insurance Commissioner has ordered all Washington health insurers to waive deductibles and copays for COVID-19 testing.
COVID-19 Testing Information for Healthcare Providers
(3/6/20)

Testing at the Public Health Laboratories

Specimens from the following patients can be sent to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories:
- Healthcare workers
- Patients in other public safety occupations (e.g., law enforcement, fire fighter, EMS)
- Patients involved in an illness cluster in a facility or group (e.g., healthcare, school, corrections, business)
- Patients with no health insurance

If seeking testing at the Public Health Laboratories, call your local health jurisdiction (LHJ) with the above information to discuss the case. If possible, please call 8 AM – 4:30 PM. PHL will fax its results to the submitter and LHJ.

For PHL testing, collect two specimens and send with the below nCoV form including submitter name, address, phone number and fax number. If the patient can produce sputum, collect nasopharyngeal (NP) and sputum specimens. If the patient cannot produce sputum, collect NP and oropharyngeal (OP) swabs. When collecting NP and OP specimens, use a synthetic swab and place the specimen in 2-3 ml viral transport media, put two identifiers (e.g., name, birthdate) on tubes and form, and store at 2-8oC.

https://www.doh.wa.gov/ForPublicHealthandHealthcareProviders/PublicHealthLaboratories/MicrobiologyLabTestMenu