

South West Action Team – Laboratory Testing Task Team

Memorandum

Date March 17, 2020
To South West (former LHIN 2)
From South West Action Team – Laboratory Testing Task Team
Subject Testing Guidelines for COVID-19

Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
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Who to test:

Given a provincial shortage of swabs, testing has been limited to the below groups:

1. Admitted patients with acute respiratory illness.
2. Health Care workers who meet case definition as a [probable COVID-19 case](#) and provide direct inpatient/ED care in an acute care facility. They must be assessed by local Occupational Health and Safety Services in order to ensure they meet testing criteria.
3. Long-term care homes, with a cluster of acute respiratory illness cases, suspicious for an outbreak. The physician would have to consult with local Health Unit or Microbiologist on Call (if service is available locally), to determine if testing indicated.

Specimen collection requirements:

For **admitted** patients:

- Collect **one nasopharyngeal swab in viral transport medium**
- One additional lower respiratory sample can be collected, if available:
 - If patient is able to, collect an expectorated sputum OR
 - If the patient is intubated, collect a tracheal aspirate
- Do **NOT** induce sputum
- Do **NOT** perform bronchoscopy, unless medically indicated

For **ambulatory care patients and those discharged from Emergency Departments:**

- Testing for COVID-19 is **NOT** recommended routinely
- Symptomatic Health Care workers are asked to report to local Occupational Health and Safety Services for further direction

If you require further information regarding this change, please contact the London Pathology and Laboratory Medicine - Microbiologist On-Call (519-685-8500 x19000).