

COVID-19 Testing and Home Care Information for the Public

Santa Barbara County health care leaders are working together to provide COVID-19 testing for those most at need in our community. Currently both patient sampling supplies and laboratory testing availability is limited. More availability may occur in the coming weeks. To assure vulnerable patients most at risk receive testing, local health care providers developed the following questions. This will help decide if priority testing is needed:

1. Do you have a fever of 100.4 or greater?
2. Do you have a new cough?
3. Do you have shortness of breath or pain taking a breath?

If you answer **no to all three questions**, you are not currently a candidate for testing and should not go to any health care facility to ask for testing at this time. We are asking all community members to follow these instructions so that the most vulnerable residents can be tested and receive the care they need. If you are sick please follow the home care guidelines below. **The instructions are the same for both tested and not tested ill persons.**

If you answer **yes to any of the questions**, contact your healthcare provider and let them know you may be a candidate for testing. The provider may ask an **additional series of questions** to determine if you will be tested, including:

- Are you 60 years of age or older?
- Have you traveled to one of the affected areas?
- Have you had close contact with someone who has COVID-19?
- Do you have lung disease?
- Do you have a medical condition like diabetes, heart disease, or cancer?
- Do you have a condition that lowers your immunity?
- Do you work in a healthcare or residential care facility?

All this will be taken into consideration, along with ruling out other sources of illness, prior to testing.

If you are tested, the results may not be available for 3 to 6 days. As a result, **you will need to remain in isolation at home until your test results are known.** This means you should not go to school, work, shopping, or to any public area until you have been cleared by your provider with a confirmed negative COVID -19 test result. An educational flier will be provided to you with additional instructions upon leaving your testing site.

Please see information below on how to provide care for yourself or another ill person in your home. This information is for anyone who is sick, regardless of whether or not they were tested for COVID-19.

Home Care Instructions for Both Tested and Not Tested Ill Persons

- **STAY HOME**, Self-isolate, and monitor for symptoms:
 - fever of 100.4 or greater, cough, and/or shortness of breath
- **If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately.**
 - In adults, emergency warning signs include*:
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - Extreme fatigue or new confusion
 - Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

- **Restrict activities outside your home.** Do not have visitors at your home. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- As much as possible, you should **stay in a specific room and away from other people** in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. Try to maintain a distance of six feet, when possible, from other people in the home and do not eat in common areas.
 - You may go outside if you are not coughing and have a private backyard, or private outdoor area that is at least 6 feet from other residents. Wear a mask if you have one.
- **If symptoms worsen**, and are not resolved with over the counter medication, call your Primary Care Provider (PCP) and they will determine if you need testing for COVID-19 and refer you as needed.
- **If you have a medical emergency**, call 911 and notify the dispatch personnel of your symptoms.

Other General Guidelines include:

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, if soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.

Soap and water are the best option if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Pets

It is recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus.

When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.

Unable to work:

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) is encouraging individuals who are unable to work due to exposure to COVID-19 to file a Disability Insurance claim.

- EDD is also encouraging employers who are experiencing a slowdown in their businesses or services as a result of the Coronavirus impact on the economy to apply for an Unemployment Insurance work sharing program.

Duration of home isolation

If you were not tested: After you have no fever and all your symptoms are gone, stay home for an additional three days. This means you will feel well and still stay home before you have contact with people outside your home.

If your COVID-19 test is negative: (meaning no COVID-19 is found) – You will be notified by your provider. It may take 4-7 days to get a result, and you should remain in home isolation until your provider confirms a negative result. If you continue to feel unwell after your negative result is confirmed, and need medical care urgently, contact your provider.

If your COVID-19 test is positive: Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions will be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and local health departments. You will be contacted by your provider or the local Public Health Department regarding next steps.

Being isolated in your home may be inconvenient, but it is temporary. And it could save lives

This is an evolving situation and as testing becomes more available prioritizations may change. Testing criteria and supply availability will be continually evaluated to ensure the best care for our community.

For the most up to date information, go to www.publichealthsb.org and see the following guidelines from CDPH:

- Home Cleaning with COVID-19 Positive Individuals ([PDF](#))
 - Guidance for Using Disinfectants at Schools and Child Cares ([PDF](#))
 - Recordatorios para el uso de desinfectantes en las escuelas y guarderías ([PDF](#))
- Steps to Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 If You're Sick ([PDF](#))
- COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for People at Risk for Serious Illness ([PDF](#))
- Entertainment Venue ([PDF](#))
- Food Industry ([PDF](#))
- Gathering Guidance ([PDF](#))

If you have additional questions and cannot find the information you need online, call the Santa Barbara County Call Center at 833-688-5551.