



Interim Criteria to Guide Testing of Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

To provide information about what’s happening with COVID-19 in Texas, public health laboratories will use the following criteria to prioritize testing. Some commercial laboratories have testing available for situations that don’t meet these criteria explicitly.

Clinical Features	&	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever ¹ or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)	AND	Any person, including health care workers ² , who has had close contact ³ with a laboratory-confirmed ⁴ COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever ¹ and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) ⁵	AND	A history of travel from affected geographic areas ⁶ (see below) within 14 days of symptom onset OR An individual(s) with risk factors that put them at higher risk of poor outcomes ⁷
Fever ¹ and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization ⁵	AND	No source of exposure has been identified

¹ Fever may be subjective or confirmed.

² For healthcare personnel, testing may be considered if there has been exposure to a person with suspected COVID-19 without laboratory confirmation. Because of their often extensive and close contact with vulnerable patients in healthcare settings, even mild signs and symptoms (e.g., sore throat) of COVID-19 should be evaluated among potentially exposed healthcare personnel. Additional information is available in CDC’s [Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

³ Close contact is defined as—

a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case,

– or –

b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).

If such contact occurs while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., gowns, gloves, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-certified disposable N95 respirator, eye protection), criteria for PUI consideration are met. Additional information is available in CDC's updated [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Confirmed COVID-19 or Persons Under Investigation for COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings](#).

Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk) and the clinical symptoms of the person with COVID-19 (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk as does exposure to a severely ill patient). Special consideration should be given to healthcare personnel exposed in healthcare settings as described in CDC's [Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with COVID-19](#).

⁴ Documentation of laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 may not be possible for travelers or persons caring for COVID-19 patients in other countries.

⁵ Clinicians are strongly encouraged to test for other causes of respiratory illness (e.g., influenza).

⁶ Affected areas are defined as geographic regions where sustained community transmission has been identified. Relevant affected areas will be defined as a country with at least a CDC Level 2 Travel Health Notice. See all [COVID-19 Travel Health Notices](#). It may also include geographic regions within the United States where documented community transmission has been identified.

⁷ Other symptomatic individuals such as, older adults (age \geq 65 years) and individuals with chronic medical conditions and/or an immunocompromised state that may put them at higher risk for poor outcomes (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, receiving immunosuppressive medications, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease).