



COVID-19 PCR TESTING UPDATE FROM MISSOURI DHSS

The Department of Health and Senior Services would like to notify Missouri health care providers of changes in guidance due to **expanded COVID-19 testing availability** within the state. The testing landscape has shifted significantly in the past eight weeks, and through partnerships with private laboratories, we encourage testing of both **symptomatic and asymptomatic** individuals. DHSS does not need to approve testing when performed outside of the State Public Health Laboratory.

As availability of diagnostic PCR testing and rapid testing methodologies continue to increase through the private marketplace, DHSS is advising clinicians to consider a wider scope of testing utilization for Missouri citizens. DHSS recently expanded testing criteria requirements for COVID-19 PCR diagnostic tests that are conducted at the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory. Although these criteria limit testing completed by the State Public Health Laboratory, it is not intended as a substitute for the clinical judgment of physicians and medical practitioners.

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Clinicians should use their judgment to determine if a patient has signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and whether the patient should be tested. Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19:

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| Cough | Chills |
| Fever | Muscle pain |
| Repeated shaking with chills | Sore throat |
| Headache | Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing |
| New loss of taste or smell | |

Clinicians are encouraged to test for other causes of respiratory illness.

Other considerations that may guide testing are epidemiologic factors such as the occurrence of local community transmission of COVID-19 infections in a jurisdiction. **In such situations, testing should be considered for persons without symptoms who are prioritized by health departments or clinicians for the PCR testing, for reasons including but not limited to: public health monitoring, sentinel surveillance, or screening of other asymptomatic individuals according to state and local plans.**

Clinicians are encouraged to exercise their best medical judgement with an eye toward expanding authorizations for a wider group of Missourians to access COVID-19 diagnostic testing as efforts to learn more about the virus, it's composition, transmissibility, and resiliency continue. As partners in protecting the health and safety of Missourians, DHSS is committed to expanding access to testing to help shape future efforts toward the tracing and containment of COVID-19.