
**LAB ALERT: 2019 Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 Test now Available through
Regional Pathology Services**

Date: March 13, 2020

Dear Regional Pathology Services Clients,

We would like to inform our clients that effective immediately they can send testing for the 2019 novel Coronavirus also known as COVID-19 through Regional Pathology Services.

We ask that clients be judicious in ordering this test due to the nationwide supply shortages of swabs to ensure that the people that need it the most are able to get tested. The supply situation is fluid, current supplies are backordered through March 23rd, 2020. We are accepting supply orders with a limit of 25 swabs per client, per month (subject to change). Regional Pathology Services will be prioritizing supplies in conjunction with the local health departments and Nebraska Public Health labs. Clients have the option of contacting their account managers with special circumstances.

Decisions on which patients to test should be based on the local epidemiology of COVID-19, and clinical signs and symptoms. It is important to also consider other causes of respiratory illness such as influenza. At this time, testing should be limited to the [CDC clinical and epidemiologic criteria](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html) for testing (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>).

As a reference, Nebraska Medicine has the following COVID-19 testing recommendations:

In general, only symptomatic patients should be tested. The most common symptoms are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may also be present such as headache, fatigue, sore throat, and hemoptysis. Risk factors for COVID-19 are rapidly changing and test availability is still somewhat limited. Thus, testing should generally be reserved for those at higher risk for disease or adverse outcomes. Testing is recommended in the following situations:

1. Hospitalized patients who have signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19, particularly those with severe disease or pneumonia of unclear etiology.
2. Persons including healthcare personnel, who within 14 days of symptom onset had close contact with a suspect or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient, or who have a history of travel from affected geographic areas within 14 days of their symptom onset.
 - a. Close contact is defined as:

- i. Being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case. OR
 - ii. 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, N95 respirator, eye protection), criteria for PUI consideration are met.
 - iii. The definition of close contact and duration of exposure needed to transmit diseases is poorly defined. Longer exposure increases risk as does exposure to patients who are coughing or who have severe disease.
- b. See the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> for updated information on affected geographic areas.

The RESPP is not required for COVID-19 testing and should be individualized.

Test Code: COVPCR (<https://www.testmenu.com/nebraska/Tests/1034699>)

Patient Demographic Form:

Clients sending this test are required to submit a complete [Patient Demographic Form](#) for Public Health Reporting (<https://www.testmenu.com/nebraska/Tests/TechnicalBulletin/6>) in addition to a COVPCR lab order. A manual requisition can be found at <http://www.reglab.org/client-services/requisitions/>.

Specimen Requirements:

Preferred specimen: Nasopharyngeal Swab in viral transport media, UTM, Starswab.
Also accepted: Other media that is equivalent to viral transport media or universal transport media.

Storage/Transport:

Refrigerated: 4 days; Frozen: 1 month (preferred)

Turnaround Time:

Performed daily and reported in 3-4 days.

*If testing is ordered in conjunction with a RESPP may take up to 7 days for results to be obtained.

Unacceptable Specimens:

Specimens not in viral transport media.

Ambient specimens.

Interface Build:

<u>Order Code</u>	<u>Order Name</u>	<u>Result Code</u>	<u>Result Name</u>	<u>Result Units</u>	<u>LOINC</u>	<u>CPT</u>
COVPCR	CORONAVIRUS PCR	COVSRC	Coronavirus Source			U0002
COVPCR	CORONAVIRUS PCR	COVRES	SARS-CoV-2			

Order Code	Order Description	AOE Code	AOE Name	Answer	Answer code	Question type
COVPCR	CORONAVIRUS PCR	COVSRC	Coronavirus Source			Free text

Result Reporting:

Regional Pathology Services will call all detected or positive results following our current critical result reporting procedures. Due to the nature of these results, we will adjust operationally to manage manual orders in the interim of order codes getting built in interfaces. If you do not receive your results call client services at 800.334.0459 and results will be manually faxed to your facility.

Confirmations will not be performed unless the FDA or the CDC changes their current recommendations. For more information on confirmation testing reach out to your local health department.

Billing:

Client bill accounts will be able to bill to insurance April 1st, 2020 for dates of service on or after February 4th, 2020. For specific pricing information reach out to your account manager.

Patient service centers are unable to collect these samples for patients. If you are unable to collect in your facility, contact your local health department. A list of all LHD's can be found at <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/LHD>.

Please note that this information changes daily. We will inform clients of any updates as they become available.

If you have any questions or issues with these changes please contact client services at 402-559-6420 and ask to speak with one of the client coordinators.