



## COUNTY OF LAKE

Health Services Department

Public Health Division

922 Bevins Court

Lakeport, California 95453-9739

Telephone 707/263-1090

FAX 707/263-4395

Denise Pomeroy  
Health Services Director

Gary Pace, MD  
Health Officer

Carolyn Holladay, PHN  
Public Health Nursing Director

Iyesha Miller  
Public Health Program Manager

## *Promoting an Optimal State of Wellness in Lake County*

### Can You Get Tested For Coronavirus If You Are Sick?

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Gary Pace, MD MPH, Public Health Officer, Lake County

- 1) **Things are changing very quickly** in terms of how to get tested for the Coronavirus. This format is an attempt to answer questions that come up. Keep checking our website to stay up to date.
- 2) **Testing is available in Lake County** through both hospitals and many outpatient facilities. This is done by getting a swab from the nasal passages and the throat, which is then sent to a regional laboratory—either through Public Health or some of the commercial labs. Supposedly, insurance will cover with no co-pay, and uninsured people can get it at no cost.
- 3) **The problem:** the labs are extremely limited in their capacity to process the specimens. The system has bottlenecked. As issues in processes are being worked on, the processing of specimens is slowly improving. Currently there is a 2 day turn-around for the Public Health lab, and about 7 days for Quest. Due to this turnaround time, providers are prioritizing patient testing. Generally, that means that people who are at high-risk—having travelled to impacted countries, been exposed to a case, work in high risk situations, or are very sick (hospitalized/intubated) are the ones that are getting tested first.
- 4) **What happens if you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath** (the symptoms of the coronavirus):
  - a. We recommend that you do not go to work or school if you are experiencing symptoms of the coronavirus. If you need to go out in public, wear a surgical mask and wash hands regularly to prevent spread.
  - b. If the illness is mild/moderate, it is best to stay home until your fever has resolved for 24 hours, and cough has subsided.
  - c. You may want to call your medical provider and see if they have any recommendations. However, since there is no antibiotic or cure, there is generally no reason to go to the clinic or Emergency Department unless you are having significant shortness of breath and need some attention and/or hospitalization. Please call in beforehand and let them know if you are coming in with a cough.
  - d. Testing will generally be reserved for critically ill or high-risk patients.
- 5) **Questions:**
  - a. Check out our website: <http://health.co.lake.ca.us/>
  - b. The Center for Disease Control website is a good source for up to date recommendations for clinical concerns or for guidance for specific agencies (i.e., schools, nursing homes, etc): [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov)
  - c. For specific questions, you can email at: [MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov](mailto:MHOAC@lakecountyca.gov)