



## SALINE GARGLE – OUTPATIENT TESTING – Whitehorse & Rural Yukon COVID-19 Testing recommendations - 2021-01-19

Gargle is for outpatient COVID collection for school-aged children (generally 5-18 years of age) only.

COVID-19 is the only test that will be run on the sample. It should not be used for persons who will/may be admitted due to respiratory illness.

All hospitalized or possible hospitalized testing should have a NP swab for COVID and testing for influenza. For hospitalized patients with evidence of lower respiratory tract disease, a lower respiratory tract sample (e.g., sputum, endotracheal aspirate, bronchoalveolar lavage, etc.) continues to be recommended. See [COVID-19 Testing Recommendations](#).

### 1. Test individuals with new symptoms compatible with COVID-19, however mild:

The most commonly found COVID-19 symptoms include:

- |                       |                                   |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Fever               | • Sore throat                     | • Loss of appetite    |
| • Chills              | • Loss of sense of taste or smell | • Nausea and vomiting |
| • Cough*              | • Headache                        | • Diarrhea            |
| • Shortness of breath | • Fatigue                         | • Muscle aches        |
| • Runny nose          |                                   |                       |

\*or acute exacerbation of a chronic cough

Less common symptoms of COVID-19 infection may include: stuffy nose, conjunctivitis, dizziness, confusion, abdominal pain, skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes.

COVID-19 is part of a differential diagnosis and clinical judgment is important in the work up of individuals presenting with these symptoms. Please remember to consider other possible diagnoses in the evaluation of the patient. **Where there is a reasonable alternate explanation, such as predictable COPD exacerbation, seasonal allergies, and otherwise no exposure risk, testing is at discretion of the provider. All patients who are tested for COVID-19 must self-isolate.**

#### Immediate management of all persons tested:

- ✓ Direct patient to self-isolate and provide standardized information sheet (step 3).
- ✓ Inform them they will be followed by YCDC (step 3).
- ✓ Report. Fax COVID reporting form or outpatient assessment form including current phone number to the local health centre and YCDC 667-8349 (step 4). **All persons investigated must be reported by fax to YCDC.**

Monday to Friday 830-430: YCDC 667-8323 or 667-5080

Weekends, holidays and after hours: MOH on call 332-6922

**This test is not recommended for asymptomatic individuals**

**It is particularly important to test symptomatic individuals who belong to certain populations:**

- Individuals who have travelled outside Yukon in the past 14 days
- Contacts of a known COVID-19 case
- Persons living in long-term care homes or other congregate settings such as shelters or group homes.
- Individuals who are homeless or without stable housing
- Individuals who have a chronic medical condition, or are immunocompromised due to medication or treatment

**Immediate reporting by phone call is required for all persons investigated who may be part of a larger Yukon cluster:** hospitalized cases, long term care facilities (residents or staff), health care providers, large gatherings or greater than 5 close contacts.

**2. How to test:** [collect specimen](#), complete the BCCDC PHL [requisition](#), selecting gargle

- Use the collection device and saline identified.
- Ensures all saline has descended into the collection tube (e.g. by gently tapping the tube).
- Remove the funnel and replace it with a screw on lid ensuring a tight seal

**NOTE:**

- See Yukon Saline Gargle Specimen Collection Procedure for detailed information.
- If collection tube contains less than 1mL of saline, reject sample and perform a NP swab.
- If the initial saline gargle collection was not successful (e.g. swallow saline or spit out saline), **re-collection should not be attempted** and a NP swab should be collected.



**ALERT:** Sample **must** arrive at BCCDC Laboratory no more than 4 days from time of collection

**3. All persons tested for COVID-19 should be isolated from others**

All persons tested should be provided the standardized educational information. Provide the attached handout [Information about the novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Self-isolating at home](#).

If the person being investigated requires direct care in the home setting (i.e. children, elderly), also provide [Information about the novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) for caregivers](#).

Patients in Whitehorse will be followed by YCDC. Patients in rural YT will be followed directly by the local community health centre with support of YCDC. Home isolation is critical to controlling community spread of this virus. All persons meeting COVID-19 testing criteria must be on self-isolation. Any concerns with client not adhering with self-isolation should be discussed with YCDC.

**4. Notify YCDC of all persons tested for COVID-19**

**For more information:**

Yukon health care provider guidance documents, including patient handouts are found at: [http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/health\\_professionals\\_guidelines.php](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/health_professionals_guidelines.php)

Public information is available at: <https://yukon.ca/covid-19>