



SALINE GARGLE – OUTPATIENT TESTING – Whitehorse & Rural Yukon COVID-19 Testing recommendations - 2022-06-08

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-19 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](#).

The most commonly found COVID-19 symptoms include:

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| • 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.

1. Test individuals who are symptomatic (as above) who meet one of the following criteria:

- 12 years or older who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated (have not received 2 doses of mRNA vaccine greater than 2 weeks prior to exposure)
- Resident or staff of a congregate setting:
 - i. Long-term care and residential care homes
 - ii. Correctional centers
 - iii. Shelters and transition homes
 - iv. Mines
- Patients in acute care settings
- Front line Health Care Workers with direct patient care (eg family physicians, nurses, dentists) and first responders
- Pregnant
- One or more risk factors for severe disease:
 - i. Obesity (BMI >30 kg/m²)
 - ii. Type 1 or 2 diabetes mellitus
 - iii. Chronic respiratory disease
 - iv. Chronic kidney disease
 - v. Cardiovascular/cerebrovascular disease
 - vi. Immunocompromised or receiving immunosuppressive therapy
 - vii. Intellectual or developmental disabilities

2. Testing required for medical procedure or as part of enhanced testing protocols

Testing is not recommended for recently recovered COVID-19 cases in the first 45 days following initial positive lab test nor asymptomatic individuals unless directed by YCDC/MOH

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. However, one must also rule out COVID-19 as a diagnoses, specifically when symptoms overlap such as COPD exacerbation, asthma, or seasonal allergies. All patients who are tested for COVID-19 must self-isolate, with the exception of non-publically funded asymptomatic pre-travel testing.

Immediate management of all persons tested:

- ✓ Direct patient to self-isolate and provide standardized information sheet (step 3).
- ✓ Inform them they can access their test results online at <https://yukon.ca/en/find-out-what-your-covid-19-test-results-mean>
- ✓ Report. **All persons investigated must be reported by fax to YCDC.** Fax COVID reporting form or outpatient assessment form including current phone number to YCDC 667-8349 (step 4).
Monday to Friday 830-430: YCDC 667-8323 or 667-5080

3. 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

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

Patients requiring hospitalization: placed in a separate room on contact and droplet precautions. Patients well enough to go home must be provided education and placed on home isolation.

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](#).

Individuals tested for COVID-19 are to access their results online: <https://yukon.ca/en/find-out-what-your-covid-19-test-results-mean>.

5. Notify YCDC of all persons tested for COVID-19

HCPs should assess for isolation feasibility at point of testing including referral to self-isolation facilities as required. Home isolation is critical to controlling community spread of this virus.

For more information:

Yukon health care provider guidance documents, including patient handouts are found at: <https://yukon.ca/en/health-and-wellness/health-concerns-diseases-and-conditions/find-information-health-professionals>

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