



## SALINE GARGLE – OUTPATIENT TESTING – Whitehorse & Rural Yukon COVID-19 Testing recommendations - 2022-01-05

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:

- |                       |                                   |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • 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
- In communities outside of Whitehorse<sup>1</sup>
- Pregnant
- One or more risk factors for severe disease:
  - i. Obesity (BMI >30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>)
  - 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

<sup>1</sup> In rural communities where widespread community transmission is identified, this testing indicator should be sunset to ensure appropriate prioritization and risk mitigation within the larger context of COVID management.

## 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>