Why is Cumberland County Health Department not offering mass testing?

Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services most people do not need a test. In general, patients in non-congregate settings who have mild symptoms that do not progress do not need testing for COVID-19 and should stay and recover at home.

When you leave your home to get tested, you could expose yourself to COVID-19 if you do not already have it. If you do have COVID-19, you can give it to someone else, including people who are high risk. Your doctor can help you decide if you need a test. There is no treatment for COVID-19. For people with mild symptoms who don’t need medical care, getting a test will not change what you or your doctor do. Testing is most important for people who are seriously ill, in the hospital, people in high-risk settings like nursing homes or long-term care facilities, and healthcare workers and other first responders who are caring for those with COVID-19.

What are the criteria for testing from the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health?

Testing through commercial and health system labs should be conducted accordingly to their protocols. Testing through the NCSLPH is available for prioritized populations. Clinicians can submit specimens to NCSLPH for person with symptoms compatible with COVID-19 who are in one of the following five categories

1. Hospitalized patients
2. Healthcare workers or first responders (e.g., EMS, law enforcement, fire department)
3. Patients who live in or have regular contact with a high-risk setting (e.g. long-term care facility, homeless shelter, correctional facility, migrant farmworker camp)
4. Persons who are at higher risk of severe illness and for whom a clinician has determined that results would inform clinical management.
5. Post-mortem specimens from patients in whom COVID-19 was suspected but not confirmed prior to death

Visit NC DHHS for the most recent provider guidance.

Who can receive testing by CCDPH?

We are prioritizing testing for individuals based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and for those that meet the criteria for North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (SLPH). This includes symptomatic patients in high risk settings (e.g., congregate care settings, long term care) and health care workers and first responders (e.g., EMS, law enforcement, fire department) on a case by case basis.
This will take place at the health department. Please call in advance for assessment and screening: 910-433-3655 or 910-433-3645.

Test collection kits will be sent to North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (SLPH).

Where and how will testing take place?
Testing will take place on health department grounds, outside of the building, to avoid unnecessary exposure to the CCPDPH visitors and staff.

Test collection will occur Monday-Thursday only. For those that meet criteria for testing, call in advance for assessment and screening (910-433-3655 or 910-433-3645

CCDPH nursing staff in full personal protective equipment (gloves, mask, face shield, and gown) will do the test collection. Test results will NOT be available on site. Those undergoing testing, should expect to go into isolation immediately following the test collection.

Can I walk into the health department to be tested?
No. In order protect CCDPH patients and staff, we do not allow walk-in testing. For those that meet criteria for testing, call in advance for assessment and screening (910-433-3655 or 910-433-3645. This allows CCDPH to prepare paperwork in advance and provide the patient with important instructions, limiting time outside of the home and potential exposure.

How quickly will I get my results back?
The estimated turnaround time at the North Carolina State Public Health Laboratory for COVID-19 testing is 24-48 hours from time of receipt. The turnaround time for private labs vary.

What are the criteria for testing at facilities other than the health department?
Providers can consider testing for any patient in whom COVID-19 is suspected. Testing through commercial and health system labs is conducted according to their protocols. Each provider and lab has their own protocol. Contact your health care provider for their testing criteria.

I’m a healthcare provider. One of my patients tested positive. Do I need to shut down my clinic? Do I need to test all my staff and patients?
For providers with patients who test positive, please contact us for guidance on how to proceed

How do I know if my symptoms are mild?

Mild symptoms defined as fever and cough without any of the following: shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chest discomfort, altered thinking, cyanosis (bluish face or lips)

What if I have severe symptoms?
If you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing), get medical attention right away. Call your doctor or 911 right away if you have:

- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain or pressure
- Confusion
- Blue lips.

Tell them about your symptoms and any potential exposure to COVID-19.

**I’m at home with mild symptoms and isolating. When can I leave my home/go back to work?**

You can stop isolating yourself when you answer YES to ALL three questions:

1. Has it been at least 7 days since you first had symptoms?
2. Have you been without fever for three days (72 hours) without any medicine for fever?
3. Are your other symptoms improved?

Call your doctor if your symptoms are getting worse or you have any concerns about your health.

**I’m at home with mild symptoms. What steps do I need to isolate or quarantine myself and/or my family?**

Follow the steps from the Centers for Disease Control to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The steps can be found [on the CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov). In general

1) Stay home except to get medical care
2) Separate yourself from other people in your home, this is known as home isolation
3) Call ahead before visiting your doctor
4) If you are sick wear a facemask in the following situations, if available
   a. If you are sick
   b. If you are caring for others
5) Cover your coughs and sneezes
6) Clean your hands often
   a. Wash your hands
   b. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
   c. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
7) Avoid sharing personal household items
8) Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday
9) Monitor your symptoms. Call your doctor if your symptoms are getting worse or you have any concerns about your health.

**When and how will I receive my test results?**
Specimens collected by Cumberland County Health Department are sent to the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health. The estimated turnaround time for COVID-19 testing is 24-48 hours. The turnaround time may change and will depend on the current capacity of the State Laboratory. The turnaround time for private labs (e.g LabCorp, Quest, etc.) will vary and could be several days.

Cumberland County Health Department will notify positive individuals of their results by phone. When you are tested, please assure your health care provider has accurate contact information. We will notify individuals tested by Cumberland County Health Department of their negative results.

Due to the volume of tests, we are unable to report back negative results for those not tested by Cumberland County Health Department. If you were not tested by Cumberland County Health Department and have not yet received your results, contact the healthcare facility where you were tested.

**What Laboratories and Manufacturers are Offering Tests for COVID-19?**

We encourage all healthcare providers to assure they are utilizing diagnostic tests that have received Emergency Use Authorization from U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). All in vitro diagnostic tests that have received an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) are listed on the [EUA page](#). Diagnostic tests without an EUA should not be used.

A list of labs that are offering COVID-19 tests is available [online](#).

**Are antibody, or serology, tests used to diagnose COVID-19?**

According the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the agency is “not aware of an antibody test that has been validated for diagnosis of COVID-19 infection. While FDA remains open to submissions of these tests for such uses, based on the underlying scientific principles of antibody tests, we do not expect that an antibody test can be shown to definitively diagnose or exclude COVID-19 infection” Further, antibody tests that are offered should include “information that negative results do not rule out COVID-19 infection and that follow-up testing with a molecular diagnostic should be considered to rule out infection, and should be ordered only by clinicians who are familiar with the use and limitations of the test.”


Because these tests are not meant for diagnosing COVID-19, persons with a positive antibody test results are not included in the Cumberland County case count. However, individuals with a positive antibody test should be encouraged to seek a diagnostic molecular diagnostic test from their healthcare provider.

**Where else can I find information about testing?**
• Visit the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health [website](http://example.com)
• Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [website](http://example.com)