COVID-19 PCR Testing Guidance: PCPs for Adult Patients

- This algorithm was developed in the setting of Vermont’s low community prevalence of COVID-19. We expect this guidance to change as prevalence changes.
- Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is the recommended test modality.
- Recommend a low threshold to test symptomatic patients or their symptomatic household contacts, especially if they are essential workers (such as healthcare or those critical to infrastructure).
- If it is determined that testing for COVID-19 is warranted, instruct patient to quarantine until their test results are available at which point further instructions will be provided, depending on the results.
- The requirement for a medical provider’s note for return to onsite work should be discouraged.

Current as of November 10, 2020

Does the patient have any of the following symptoms?
Fever*, cough*, shortness of breath*, loss of taste or smell*, aches, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea?

Yes

Has the patient had close contact (within 6 feet) for a total of 15 minutes with a person with COVID-19, or traveled from a high risk area**** within a 24 hour period?

No

Yes

Are there other more likely conditions or exposure history to explain symptoms?***

No

Test for COVID-19, patient needs to quarantine

Test for COVID-19 if patient remains asymptomatic at day 7 (patient needs to quarantine for 7 days and while awaiting test results) OR patient should remain in quarantine for 14 days. **

Release from quarantine at 7 days does not apply to those who work in a congregate care facility.

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Patient tests positive for COVID-19:
1) Self isolate for at least 10 days since symptom onset and at least 24 hours since last fever without antipyretics OR, if asymptomatic, 10 days have passed since positive test
2) Monitor symptoms.
3) May return to work without restrictions once self isolation period has ended.

Patient tests negative for COVID-19:
- Known exposure to COVID positive person or travel
  - If patient is within 7 days of known exposure or travel, continue quarantine and monitor symptoms until 14 days have passed since last exposure or remains asymptomatic and tests negative after day 7 of quarantine**
  - Return to work without restrictions once quarantine has ended.

Patient tests negative for COVID-19:
- No known exposure
  - Return to work once afebrile for 24 hours without antipyretics and symptoms improve.

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* High index of suspicion for COVID-19 if a patient presents with these symptoms, however young healthy people may have mild symptoms.
** Day of last exposure may be extended in situations where the COVID positive person is household contact and cannot separate from patient with COVID-19.
*** Such as asthma exacerbation, seasonal allergies.
**** For up to date information regarding risk associated with travel, visit https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel.