COVID-19 TESTING INFORMATION

Why is COVID-19 Testing Important?
- COVID-19 is the disease being caused by the virus SARS—Cov-2. It is currently a worldwide pandemic, affecting 6 of the 7 continents and millions of people around the world. The virus is causing illnesses that can easily overwhelm healthcare systems and cause high amounts of hospitalizations and death.
- In order to know where cases of COVID-19 are, and to contain them quickly, testing must be done to get the most accurate number and locations as possible.

Who Should get Tested?
- Any healthcare worker or first responder who may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19.
- Any individual with repeated and close contact with a person with lab-confirmed COVID-19.
- Any individual showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, especially if over the past 3 weeks traveled to an area with COVID-19 cases.
- A hospitalized patient that is severely ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

How is the Testing Process?
- There are two types of tests currently – a RT-PCR test and a serology test.
  - The RT-PCR test is done by putting a long swab through someone's nose and into the back part of the nose/throat. The swab is then removed from one side of the nose and inserted into the other side. It is then placed in a container and sent to a lab for the test to be run.
  - The serology test is also known as an antibody test. These tests are newer and use blood. The blood can be obtained either from a fingerstick from the tip of a finger, or from drawing blood out from a vein. The blood from a fingerstick can either be run in the office, or much like a venous blood sample it can be sent off to a special lab to run the test.
- Each test is most useful at a different time period from when we assume you came into contact with COVID-19. A physician will have a better idea of which one is best to order.
- Both types of tests are not equally reliable, so a physician will make the ultimate determination on what testing should be done, and which type will be ordered.

Where can I get Tested?
- There are currently no drive-through locations for COVID-19 testing in the county. These sites are ideal places to be tested for those with milder symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Your physician's office or the closest hospital may be able to collect the sample from you and send it to a lab for testing. Contact your physician's office if you feel you may qualify for a test or if you feel ill.

For more information, go to: https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/testing.aspx. This website has links to test collection sites across Texas, the latest COVID-19 case counts by county, types of tests currently available, and a COVID-19 symptom checker.

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