



Indiana State Department of Health

Indiana Health Alert Network Notification – March 12, 2020

Updated Information on the COVID-19 Response

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has identified 12 positive cases of COVID-19 in the state since Friday, March 6.

ISDH is working closely with local and federal officials to ensure infection control protocols are in place to reduce further transmission of COVID-19. All cases remain in isolation, and close contacts are being interviewed and instructed on how to home quarantine and when to seek medical care. There is a dashboard now on the ISDH website showing the number of positive cases. The dashboard is updated daily with information through 11:59 p.m. the previous day.

Also on March 6, Gov. Holcomb declared a public health emergency calling on state agencies to continue their diligence and cooperation in responding to COVID-19 and ensuring that Indiana can seek funding to control and stop the spread of novel coronavirus.

There is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The CDC recommends taking the same preventive steps that help stop the spread of any respiratory infection, including influenza, which continues to circulate widely in Indiana. This includes washing hands often with soap and water, staying home when you are sick and covering a cough or sneeze.

ISDH is limiting testing to hospitalized patients with severe respiratory symptoms without another source and to those at most risk, including nursing home patients, jail and prison inmates, and healthcare providers with symptoms and no known source of exposure. This is an evolving situation and guidelines will likely change.

To facilitate timely testing for our most at-risk populations and to have the ability to direct and support our providers, ISDH is recommending the *attached* [algorithm](#) for testing. Testing for SARS-CoV-2 is now occurring at private laboratories, so please remember that all cases of novel diseases are reportable to ISDH. Please let ISDH or your local health department know if you receive a positive test result by entering the case into NBS. Please also let the patient know the result of the test.

With increased spread in the community it becomes not necessary to test every patient with known close contact with a known positive. The recommendation is that these patients [self-quarantine at home](#) or if hospitalized then patients should be presumed to have COVID-19 and proper precautions should be taken.



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If COVID-19 is suspected in a patient (as noted in the attached document), healthcare providers should immediately notify their local public health department AND the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) at (317) 233-7125 during normal business hours (M-F, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.) for consultation and testing authorization. For assistance after hours, contact (317) 233-1325 to reach the epidemiologist on call.

Patients seeking care at a healthcare facility suspected of having COVID-19 should be immediately placed in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR), if available. Healthcare providers should implement standard, contact and airborne precautions (N95 respirator or PAPR), including eye protection (goggles or face shield) when caring for patients suspected of having COVID-19.

Low risk, mildly-symptomatic patient who suspects COVID-19, can be advised to [self-quarantine at home](#), unless medical attention is required. For patients who call requesting testing, please and consult a private lab if the patient is not.

Facilities should seek to develop alternative means of evaluation and testing. Suggestions from the CDC include:

- **Utilizing telehealth to evaluate patients**
 - **Performing routine follow up visits for chronic diseases so as to not potentially expose at risk patients**
 - **Patients with symptoms of fever and respiratory illness that do not require emergency care evaluation should be advised to stay at home**
 - **(Exceptions are people in a nursing home facility, prison, or jail and healthcare workers with symptoms of fever and respiratory and no known source)**
 - **Patients recommended to stay at home can be advised on caring for themselves at home, symptoms to watch for, how to social distance, and when they should seek additional care**
- **Alternative sites of testing. Consider:**
 - **Develop a team that can test people at home**
 - **Drive-thru testing**
 - **Setting up an alternative testing site for low risk patients away from the emergency department**
- **Train nurse lines and schedulers to ask specific questions to evaluate for potential COVID-19 cases**



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Based on your local situation, if N95 respirators are not available, surgical facemasks are an acceptable alternative in general care of patients. N95 masks and PAPRs should be prioritized for providers who do procedures that are aerosol generating (e.g., obtaining nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs, intubation, bronchoscopy, suctioning). Once respiratory and N95 masks are no longer in short supply they should again be used for providers caring for known or suspected COVID 19 patients. Updated PPE Strategies for Optimizing PPE and RE-Use are attached, and more information is also posted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [here](#).

Please subscribe to the ISDH Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) [webpage](#) for updated news and detailed guidance on the COVID-19 outbreak. We will be updating regulating as new information becomes available. For epidemiology information regarding COVID-19, please contact the ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center at 317-233-7125 or e-mail epiresource@isdh.in.gov.