

COVID-19 Testing Information update from the DC Office of Disability Rights

A full list of resources [for residents concerned about Coronavirus can be found here.](#)

Dear Community Member:

Mayor Muriel Bowser and the District Department of Health (DC Health) published information for residents on getting tested for the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the District, including new locations for drive-thru and walk-up testing by hospitals and health providers.

This information and other updates on the District's response to COVID-19 are available at [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).

## COVID-19 Testing

Doctors decide on COVID-19 testing. If an individual is experiencing symptoms including cough, fever, and shortness of breath, they should consult their doctor before visiting. If their doctor decides that a COVID-19 test is warranted, the doctor has the ability to swab the appropriate areas and send the swabs to a private lab for testing or to work with DC Health to send it to the District's Public Health Lab. The private lab will share results with the doctor who will share the results with the individual. The private lab will also alert DC Health of all COVID-19 test results, regardless of whether the test is positive or negative.

If any medical providers need assistance with testing, they are encouraged to reach out to DC Health.

[COVID-19 Specimen Submission Guidelines](#)

## Priority Groups for Testing

The District has identified three priority groups for testing, which are aligned with those identified by the US Public Health Service (USPHS):

- **Hospitalized patients and healthcare facility workers with COVID-19 symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath.** This ensures optimal care options for all hospitalized patients, lessens the risk of healthcare-associated infections, and maintains the integrity of the US healthcare system. Many of the patients in this group are currently receiving testing within hospitals and through their health systems' occupational health programs.
- **Patients in long-term care facilities with symptoms; patients over the age of 65 with symptoms; patients with underlying conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease who also have symptoms; and first responders with symptoms.** This priority ensures those at highest risk of complication of infection are rapidly identified and appropriately triaged.
- **Critical infrastructure workers with symptoms; individuals who do not meet any of the above categories but have symptoms; healthcare facility workers and first**

**responders; and individuals in detention centers and individuals experiencing homelessness with symptoms.** This priority will allow us to test individuals, decrease community spread, and ensure the health of essential workers.

## **United Medical Center (UMC) COVID-19 Testing Site**

### **Why is the District of Columbia offering COVID-19 testing at United Medical Center (UMC)?**

The District of Columbia is offering free, appointment-required testing for DC residents who have been ordered by a doctor to have a test due to COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, congestion, body aches, chills, runny nose).

### **Who can receive a COVID-19 test at UMC?**

Resources for testing are limited; therefore, testing must be prioritized. DC residents who have been ordered by a doctor to have a test due to COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, congestion, body aches, chills, runny nose). Testing criteria includes:

- DC residents, with symptoms, who are 65-years and older
- Healthcare providers or individuals, with symptoms, who work in a healthcare facility that is located in DC
- First responders, with symptoms, who work for the District of Columbia Government
- DC residents, with symptoms, who have an underlying health condition(s), including but not limited to asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease

### **What are the testing dates and times?**

The first drive thru testing will occur on Friday, April 3, from 10 am to 2 pm.

Starting April 6, the District will test (drive thru and walk-up) on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The times of operation include:

- Monday, April 6, 10 am – 2 pm (drive thru and walk-up)
- Wednesday, April 8, 10 am – 2 pm (drive thru and walk-up)
- Friday, April 10, from 10 am – 2 pm (drive thru and walk-up)

The District will test first responders on Thursday, April 2, from 10 am to 2 pm.

### **Do I need to make an appointment?**

- Yes. An appointment is required and must be scheduled through the Testing Triage Call Center by calling (855) 363-0333.

- A person meeting the testing criteria must pre-register by calling the Testing Triage Call Center at (855) 363-0333. The Call Center evaluation will include individuals answering pre-screening questions regarding their signs and symptoms.
- If the individual meets the testing criteria, the individual will receive additional information about testing and what to bring to the site on the day of their appointment.
- There is no on-site registration at UMC. An individual who does not pre-register will not receive a test.

### **What are the hours of operation for the Testing Triage Call Center?**

The Testing Triage Call Center hours are 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday.

### **What will an individual need to bring to the test site?**

The individual that meets the testing criteria and receives an appointment, must bring the following:

1. The testing confirmation email from DC Health, via electronic (i.e., on their phone or a device) or printed copy **AND**,
2. A valid, government-issued photo ID showing proof of residency in the District of Columbia.
  - If an individual does not have a valid District of Columbia government-issued ID, they must bring any government issued ID with a bill (e.g., utility, cell phone, lease, bank statement, etc.) marked to their current address.
  - First responders and healthcare workers who work in the District of Columbia will be asked to provide proof of employment (e.g., badge).

### **Where is the test site?**

Testing will be in the parking lot of United Medical Center (UMC) at 1310 Southern Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20032. Vehicles should enter via 13th Street, SE and be prepared to wait between 45-75 minutes (please plan accordingly, bathrooms will not be provided on-site). Starting Monday, April 6, individuals walking up should enter from Southern Avenue, SE.

### **When will walk-up testing begin?**

Walk-up testing will begin on Monday, April 6 and every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday thereafter. Pre-registration is still required for walk-up testing.

### **What is the process for COVID-19 testing?**

You will receive a nasal swab. During this test you may feel some discomfort, including nose irritation or minor bleeding. All are normal.

### **What should I do while I wait to be swabbed?**

- Drive-thru testing: **Stay in your car at all times** and keep your windows rolled up, unless asked to roll your window down for testing.
- Walk-up testing: If you are walking, please remain 6 feet from other individuals while you wait and cover your cough and sneeze.

### **When will my results be ready?**

After testing, an individual will learn results within 3-5 days. After the test, the individual will receive a letter with the information on how to receive your results.

### **Who will be processing this information?**

The DC Public Health Laboratory is processing the tests taken at this site. DC Health will have access to your test results. **For patient privacy, results will NOT be available via phone.**

### **What should you do while you wait for results?**

Because your results are unknown immediately after testing, it's critical you stay home. Staying home until your results are known helps stop potential spread in our community.

- Do not go to work or spend time in public places. Work from home if you can. Do not go to restaurants to pick-up or carry out food, avoid visits to essential businesses, etc.
- Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home. Stay in a specific room and if possible, a designated bathroom away from others in your home.
- Wear a facemask when around other people or pets, at home and outside.
- Wash your hands, multiple times a day, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid sharing household items like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, and bedding.
- Maintaining your mental health while you wait is important. Certified clinicians are available 24/7 through the DC Department of Behavioral Health's mental health hotline: 1-888-793-4357.

### **How is testing prioritized?**

After a doctor's evaluation, only individuals exhibiting signs and symptoms that have pre-registered will be tested. If you are not symptomatic, there is much less of a risk that you are spreading the disease and, if you are carrying COVID-19, testing could result in a false negative. Those showing signs and symptoms must be rapidly identified so that they can take the appropriate actions, including preventing further spread in our community.

### **Is this the only testing option?**

No. This testing site expands options available within the District, and it does not replace existing testing offered by many local healthcare providers. We still encourage you to contact your medical provider by phone or online if you have symptoms. Only a doctor can refer you for testing, but remember, not everyone needs to be tested and most people can recover at home.

## **Why isn't everyone being tested?**

Resources for testing are limited (testing kits, staff, personal protective equipment for medical providers). Testing must be prioritized. For people who have mild symptoms, a positive test result would not change how they should handle their illness. There is currently no vaccine or cure.

**If your symptoms worsen, please seek prompt medical attention. Call 911 if you have a medical emergency such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face.**

## **Additional Testing Sites Currently Operating**

### **Children's National Health System**

To reduce the number of visits by families to emergency departments for COVID-19 testing, Children's National Health System opened a drive-thru/walk-up location where primary care doctors in the region can refer young patients for COVID-19 specimen collection and testing. The site location, donated by Trinity Washington University in Northwest DC, can safely test children and young adults through 22 years of age who have been identified by their pediatrician or other primary care doctor as having symptoms of COVID-19. The specimens are collected and sent offsite to the program's laboratory partner, Quest Diagnostics, for testing.

Referral needed?

Yes. Community pediatricians and other primary care doctors use their clinical judgement to determine who they refer to the drive-thru/walk-up location. They may choose to refer patients who are either at an increased risk for developing severe symptoms due to the child's underlying medical condition or because the child has an immediate family member who is in a high-risk category. All referred patients receive the necessary paperwork and directions to access the drive-through and walk-up site from their referring physician. When arriving at the site, photo identification and the referral form are required to enter. All results are communicated back to the family by the referring doctor within three to five days.

### **Kaiser Permanente**

Kaiser Permanente has established a walk-up/drive-thru COVID-19 testing site in Washington, DC near their Capitol Hill Medical Center, which is located at 700 2nd Street, NE. They also have five (5) additional drive-up clinics in the mid-Atlantic region.

Referral needed?

Yes. All Kaiser Permanente testing sites are for their members and require a doctor's order and appointment.

### **MedStar Health**

The MedStar Health e-Visit is a faster, easier way to see a medical provider for basic express care needs. The service is a virtual/video visit with a medical provider offering consultation, diagnosis, treatment, and even prescriptions when appropriate. MedStar e-Visit is available 24/7 and is open to anyone in the MedStar service area which includes Washington, DC. This service can be accessed via the MedStar e-Visit app on a smartphone or tablet, or on a PC by going directly to [MedStarhealth.org/eVisit](https://www.MedStarhealth.org/eVisit). **You do NOT need to be a MedStar Health patient to access an e-Visit provider. In other words, this platform is open to residents of the District of Columbia.** Based on the outcomes of the e-Visit, patients may be referred for COVID-19 testing from an e-Visit provider to one of MedStar Health's testing sites with a physician's order.

MedStar Health also has two urgent care facilities in the District of Columbia: one on Capitol Hill and one in Adams Morgan. Both facilities are open seven (7) days a week from 8 am-8 pm and offer testing for COVID-19 if indicated with a doctor's order. MedStar also has 12 additional urgent care centers in the Washington, DC/Baltimore areas.

### **DC Department of Health (DC Health)**

DC Health is offering free, appointment required COVID-19 testing for DC residents. If you have experienced symptoms like fever, cough, and shortness of breath and would like to be tested, please call 1 (855) 363-0333, Monday-Friday from 9 am-4 pm.