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# COVID-19 Information: What it Takes to be Tested

EL PASO, Texas – The City of El Paso Department of Public Health is sharing the step-by-step process on how the public can be tested for COVID-19 in order to address questions from providers, staff and area residents.

**Step 1:** All area residents should stay home whenever possible and monitor themselves for flu-like symptoms. This includes cough, fever and shortness of breath. If a combination of all three symptoms does not improve over the course of 72 hours or worsens, they should contact their healthcare provider.

**Step 2:** If a resident has all these symptoms AND has traveled outside of the El Paso region or if they have had close contact with someone who is a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19, they should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

**Step 3:** The healthcare provider will assess the patient who is seeking care and should rule out other causes of symptoms, including allergies, and the common cold. Additionally, patients must provide proof of being negative for Influenza and Strep throat.

**Step 4:** After the healthcare provider rules out other sources of illness, they should contact the Department of Public Health Epidemiology Program for triage, based on the Texas Department of State Health Services guidelines. (See: [Interim Criteria to Guide Testing of Persons Under Investigation for Coronavirus Disease 2019](#))

**Step 5:** If approved by the Public Health Epidemiologist, the healthcare provider will receive a “test number” from the epidemiology team. Using proper personal protective equipment the provider will collect and submit two upper respiratory samples (nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs), plus a third lower respiratory sample if possible.

**Step 6:** The healthcare provider will then notify the Department of Public Health Laboratory prior to submitting the sample to the lab. While awaiting results it is important to have the patient self-quarantine at home if they are discharged from care.

**Step 7:** Once the samples have been analyzed, the results will be sent to the healthcare provider to notify the patient. Positive results will trigger an epidemiological investigation by the Department of Public Health.

Residents who do not have a primary care physician or who do not have insurance should dial 2-1-1 and select option six (6) for a referral to a healthcare provider. There is no cost for the approved test analysis conducted by the Public Health Laboratory.

Further information and details are available at [www.EPHealth.com](http://www.EPHealth.com) at the COVID-19 page.

- [Message from Fire Chief Mario D’Agostino – 911 Protocol](#)
- [Message from Doctor Hector Ocaranza – Situational Report \(English\)](#)
- [Message from Doctor Hector Ocaranza – Informe Situacional \(Spanish\)](#)

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Promoting **Transparent & Consistent Communication** Among All Members of the Community