

June 6, 2020

South Dakota Guidance on Antibody Testing for COVID-19

General Testing Recommendations for Viral Tests

Medical providers are recommended to test individuals with signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19 infection, including:

- Cough or
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Or at least two of these symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

CDC released **Antibody Testing Interim Guidelines** available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antibody-tests-guidelines.html>

Key Points:

- CDC's recommendation is that the information on antibody testing is rapidly evolving.
- Antibody test results might help identify persons previously infected with SARS-CoV-2, including:
 - Population-level seroprevalence studies.
 - For persons presenting 9–14 days after illness onset, it can support detection of active COVID-19 illness, in addition to the recommended viral test (e.g., PCR).
 - Evaluation of recovered individuals for convalescent plasma donations.
 - For children presenting with late complications of COVID-19 illness, such as multisystem inflammatory syndrome.
- If antibody testing is ordered by clinicians, laboratories with an antibody assay that have FDA emergency use authorization (EUA) are preferred.
- Antibody test results should be interpreted in the context of the following:
 - Prevalence of COVID-19 infection in the population tested.
 - Antibody is expected to be low in communities, even in heavily impacted areas (e.g., <5% to 25%)
 - In outbreak settings, a higher percentage of the population is anticipated to have antibody
 - Antibody test performance characteristics (e.g., sensitivity, specificity).
 - An antibody algorithm was used (i.e., a person who initially test positive is tested with a second [separate] antibody test to optimize the positive predictive value). On June 29, SD Public Health Laboratory will implement antibody testing for SARS-CoV-2 to detect both IgM and IgG. SDPHL will provide dual antibody testing, or two antibody tests that detect different SARS-CoV-2 antigens.
- **Antibody tests should not be used to determine immune status in individuals until the presence, durability, and duration of immunity is established.**
- Antibody tests should not be used for the following:
 - To change clinical practice or use of personal protective equipment (PPE) by health care workers and first responders.
 - To make decisions about grouping persons residing in or being admitted to congregate settings, such as schools, dormitories, or correctional facilities.
 - To make decisions about returning staff to the workplace.
 - To discontinue individual precautionary actions such as physical distancing and use of PPE.

Testing at the South Dakota Public Health Laboratory

The following groups of individuals will be prioritized for viral testing:

- Hospitalized patients
- Healthcare workers, first responders, and active military, with symptoms
- Individuals living or working in institutional settings, such as long-term care facilities, with symptoms
- Underinsured or uninsured individuals, with symptoms
- Low-income individuals or those unable to pay for testing, with symptoms
- Homeless individuals with symptoms

Whether a person tests positive or negative for COVID-19, preventive measure should still be used to protect yourself and others.

Preventive measures include the following:

- Know how COVID-19 spreads to avoid being exposed to the virus
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact with others outside your home
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others, such as at the grocery store or to pick up other necessities
- Cover coughs and sneezes to prevent the spread of the virus
- Clean and disinfect frequently touches surfaces daily