

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Sonic Healthcare USA is closely monitoring the situation regarding the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). We are dedicated to promoting a healthy and safe environment for our patients and employees. The information below provides answers to frequently asked questions.

Q: What steps should I take to prevent illness?

- Clean hands often.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.

Q: What precautions are applied if I have had "close contact" with a confirmed patient with COVID-19?

- The CDC defines "close contact" as (a) being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for more than a few minutes; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case; OR (b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).
- Any patient who has had "close contact" with a person confirmed to have, or being evaluated for, COVID-19 infection, should immediately seek care from a healthcare professional and/or notify their local health department.

Q: What should I do if I am sick?

AEL Patient Service Centers and phlebotomy sites cannot collect specimens for COVID-19 testing. Please contact your healthcare provider.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html

Q: Are AEL Patient Service Centers (PSC)/In-Office Phlebotomists (IOP) allowed to collect specimens (e.g., nasopharyngeal, oropharyngeal swabs) for COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 testing?

No. Currently AEL laboratories and our staff do not collect respiratory (e.g., nasal pharyngeal swabs, sputum) specimens for COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 testing. Our lab is equipped to perform the laboratory testing only.

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Q: Are AEL Patient Service Centers (PSC)/In-Office Phlebotomists (IOP) equipped to perform phlebotomy services for patients suspected or with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19?

No. At this time, AEL PSCs and IOPs are not equipped with adequate isolation rooms (AIIR) and are not set up to receive patients under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19. Blood draw services for PUIs and/or with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 should be deferred to facilities with an AIIR (e.g., hospitals).

Q: What does it mean if the specimen tests NEGATIVE for the virus that causes COVID-19?

A negative test result for this test means that SARS-CoV-2 RNA was not detected in the specimen. However, a negative result does not completely rule out COVID-19 and should not be used as the sole basis for treatment or patient management decisions. When diagnostic testing is negative, the possibility of a false negative result should be considered in the context of any recent exposure and clinical signs or symptoms that may suggest COVID-19. The possibility of a false negative result should especially be considered if COVID-19 is clinically likely and diagnostic tests for other causes of illness (e.g., other respiratory illness) are negative. If COVID-19 is still suspected, re-testing should be considered by healthcare providers in consultation with public health authorities.

Q: What does it mean if the specimen tests POSITIVE for the virus that causes COVID-19?

A positive test result indicates that SARS-CoV-2 RNA was detected, and the patient is presumably infected with the virus and presumably contagious. Laboratory test results should be considered in the clinical and community context to establish a final diagnosis and care plan. Positive results do not rule out simultaneous bacterial infection or co-infection with other viruses. Patient management decisions should be made by a healthcare provider and should follow current CDC guidelines. The COVID-19 test has been designed to minimize the likelihood of false positive test results, but it may not be possible to completely exclude a false positive.

Q: Should I travel?

Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations on travel here: www.cdc.gov/travel