COVID-19 Guidance
Facts about COVID-19 Testing in Marin

MARIN
Health &
HUMAN
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Health, Well-being & Safety

Who is this guidance for:

Indviduals who live and work in Marin County.

Why is the guidance needed:

Testing kit availability is improving but availability is still not adequate for testing all residents. Therefore it is important to understand the criteria for testing and screening. This guidance also provides information about different types of COVID-19 tests.

What the guidance says:

Important Key Points

- County of Marin HHS's current testing priorities are our communities that have experienced the most illness and death. These communities are our congregate living facilities such as senior nursing homes, and high-risk communities identified in outbreak investigations.
- Many Marin healthcare providers are providing testing for COVID-19 for their patients with symptoms.
- As more, and different types, of test kits become available Marin may broaden its testing priorities.
- The test is not 100% accurate – if you receive a negative test result but still have or develop symptoms you may have COVID-19. You should quarantine yourself and contact your healthcare provider for guidance.

Who should get testing?

- Individuals with symptoms
- Individuals who have close contact with known cases
- Individuals identified by the health department as being at high risk based on outbreak investigations

Suggested Testing Guidelines

The County of Marin recommends using California Department of Public Health's **Testing Guidance**.

For patients meeting the testing or screening criteria, clinicians should use the **COVID-19 testing and reporting** form to refer patients for field-based COVID-19 testing. At the end of the form click yes to the question "Is this patient being referred for field-based testing" and Public Health staff will contact the patient within 1 - 2 business days to arrange testing.

Testing is available for Marin County residents only and will be prioritized based on the California Department of Public Health's priority categories. Health care providers must complete the **COVID-19 testing form**.

Who Is providing testing?

COVID-19 testing is being offered by multiple health care facilities in Marin County. All residents have access to the Marin HHS Field testing site with a healthcare provider referral. Some independent labs may also be conducting testing for a fee. Regardless of where you are testing, the results are reported to Marin HHS.

How much does it cost to get a test?

For people with insurance, testing is covered by their insurance. For those without insurance, there may be options for free or low-cost testing through a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) if you meet the criteria. The Marin County FQHCs are:

- Marin City Health and Wellness
- Marin Community Clinics
- Ritter
- Coastal Health Alliance

For more information visit: **https://www.rchc.net/marin-county-health-centers/**

What are the different types of COVID-19 tests?

Currently, there are two types of tests, molecular test and serological. The chart below outlines the differences.

	Molecular Test	**Serological Test**
About	First type of test on the market and used by WHO and CDC. It is also known as Polymerise Chain Reaction (PCR) testing.	This test is still in development. Unlike the molecular test, the serological test can identify those that were infected and have recovered.
How Administered	Administered using a 6-inch nasal swab (although a saliva-based test may be on the market soon).	Administered using a blood sample (usually a finger prick)
Results	Result take a few hours to days but a rapid (less than an hour) test is in development	Results take about 10-15 minutes
How it works	Works by detecting viral genetic material.	Works by detecting antibodies in your blood: • Immunoglobulin G (IgG) indicates your body mounted an immune response against COVID-19 • Immunoglobulin M (IgM) indicates you were recently exposed to COVID-19)
How effective it is	There is a chance this test will deliver a FALSE result even if you do have COVID-19 (false negative).	This test has not yet been reviewed by the FDA. A negative test does not rule out a COVID-19 infection.
Important Information	If you have symptoms you should quarantine yourself even if you have a negative test result.	Antibody testing should not be used as the sole based to determine infection status.

Where to get more information

- For the most up-to-date Coronavirus and COVID-19 information visit the CDC: **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html**
- For up-to-date Marin information visit the Marin County COVID-19 Information Portal at **coronavirus.marinhhs.org**

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