

Information for Residents and Caregivers Regarding COVID-19 Influenza and other Virus Testing

1. Why is the test being done?

Testing for COVID-19, influenza and other viruses is done to identify the source of symptoms, guide treatment and limit spread of the virus. Finding the virus early is key to controlling an outbreak at a facility.

2. Who completes the testing?

The test will be performed by trained regulated health care workers which may include, but is not limited to, Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and Physicians.

3. Why is advance consent being obtained?

Informed consent is required for any test. Advance consent for swabbing allows for timely assessment, management of symptoms and interventions to be put in place to limit spread of the illness. Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

4. How is the test performed?

COVID-19 testing is done by collecting a sample of cells from your nose or throat on a small swab. For a nose swab, the soft tipped swab will be inserted into your nostril. It is guided gently to the back of the nose and twirled a few times to collect the cells. This may be repeated in the other nostril.

If a throat swab is used, the small swab is gently guided to the back of the throat and a sample is taken by swabbing back and forth. Once the swab has been collected it will be sent to the laboratory for testing.

5. What are the risks of the procedure?

Your nose may feel irritated or bleed a little after the procedure. The swab may cause some people to sneeze, gag, cough or irritate the back of the throat. The procedure is over quite quickly and any irritation lasts only a short time.

6. What happens with the results?

A positive test result will be sent to the ordering practitioner and a Public Health case investigator. If you live in a Long Term Care (LTC) or Designated Supportive Living Facility, the Public Health Investigator will connect with the facility directly to discuss the result and provide further instructions regarding isolation. You or your family member (or the person for whom you provide support for decision making) will be monitored during isolation.

7. Will I or my loved one need to be tested again?

There is a chance that during the course of the pandemic and throughout the annual influenza season you may be offered testing again to investigate an outbreak or to understand what viruses are around. The test provides information for that point in time. A negative test does not mean that a person can't get sick even just a few days later. In this case they may be tested again.