

SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)

Pediatric Testing Guidance & FAQs for Clinicians

Instructions for COVID-19 testing of VUMC pediatric patients by a VUMC provider for symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. via telehealth, at a clinic visit, during hospital admission):

COVID -19 testing ***IS INDICATED*** for children in the following scenarios:

- Outpatients with fever ($T \geq 38^{\circ} C$) AND respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath)
- Outpatients with respiratory symptoms AND contact with confirmed COVID-19 case
- Children being admitted for new onset respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, tachypnea, hypoxia) OR fever of unclear etiology. Consider obtaining both RPP and COVID testing in these patients.

COVID-19 testing is ***NOT INDICATED*** for:

- Asymptomatic patients
- Pre-operative screening
- Children with identified source of fever or respiratory symptoms (e.g. bloodstream infection, cholangitis, UTI). Children with other respiratory viruses detected can still be tested for COVID-19.

Considerations in Hospitalized Patients:

- **COVID-19 testing in those who develop symptoms AFTER admission**
 - Consider alternative reasons for fever/respiratory symptoms in children hospitalized for >7 days who lack known exposure to COVID-19 case.
 - If patient does NOT have other clinical reasons for their new fever/respiratory symptoms OR has concerning findings on CXR, place patient on precautions (CDEP – Contact, droplet, Eye Protection) and proceed with COVID-19 testing
- **Repeat COVID-19 testing is not routinely recommended but can be considered in:**
 - Hospitalized children with an initial negative COVID-19 test who have rapidly progressive respiratory compromise and radiographic findings consistent with COVID-19 (bilateral, peripheral, ill-defined and ground-glass opacification).
 - Pediatric Infectious Diseases consult recommended before ordering repeat COVID-19 test

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How is the test ordered?

Testing does not require approval by Infection Prevention. Please note, all providers can order the test; however, not all locations may be approved to collect the specimen. Approved locations include Ambulatory Assessment Sites, Inpatient Units, and Emergency Departments. The name of the test in eStar is "SARS-CoV-2 PCR."

How should a swab for COVID-19 testing be collected?

Nasopharyngeal swabs are preferred. Insert a swab into the nostril parallel to the palate. For a best practice video visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVJNWefmHjE>. Leave the swab in place for a few seconds to absorb secretions. Those collecting the swab should wear the recommended PPE for COVID-19 suspects (gown, gloves, surgical mask and eye protection).

How should the specimen be transported to lab?

Seal the closed specimen-container within a 95kPa biohazard transport bag. If such as bag is unavailable, double-bag the specimen within traditional specimen transport bags. Place the bagged specimen within a hard styrofoam container and refrigerated cold pack or in a bag of ice (do not freeze).

For patients on-site at VUMC, hand deliver the specimen to the Clinical Microbiology Laboratory in 4524 TVC.

For off-site clinic patients, specimens should be delivered directly to 4524 TVC by courier. The clinics should store the specimen in a refrigerator until the courier arrives.

How is SARS-CoV-2 testing performed at VUMC?

This qualitative test is based upon PCR amplification and detection of viral nucleic acid. The reagents and methods of the SARS-CoV-2 test at VUMC specifically emulate the assay developed by the CDC for US public health laboratories.

Can we send tests for other respiratory viruses, like the respiratory pathogen panel?

Yes, the same swab collected for COVID-19 testing can be used for the Respiratory Pathogen Panel (RPP) testing (you do not need to send separate swabs).