



Resident and Family Information about Universal COVID-19 Testing at The Virginia Home

Updated: 06/18/2020

Important information about COVID-19 testing of all nursing home residents and staff members.

Current Situation: Nursing home residents and staff members are at increased risk for COVID-19 infection because of their close interaction in the facility. Universal COVID-19 testing of residents and staff members is one tool that can be used to decrease the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes. Baseline universal testing of all nursing home residents and staff members is recommended by the federal government prior to reopening. Such testing will likely be mandated by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

When will The Virginia Home be performing Universal Testing?

The Virginia National Guard will be performing universal COVID-19 testing of all residents and staff on Friday, June 26, 2020. If you are a surrogate decision maker or guardian, you will be contacted by phone to provide verbal consent for testing.

Why test everyone, even if no one is sick?

Residents and staff members can be infected with COVID-19 and have no symptoms. Even if they have no symptoms, infected individuals can still spread COVID-19 to others.

What is the purpose of testing?

Once we know who is infected and who is not, we can take actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the facility. Infected staff members will stay home until they are no longer contagious. Infected residents will be put on isolation precautions and they may be moved to special COVID unit. If no new cases are found, we may be able to proceed through the reopening phases. Detailed guidance from the health department is expected very soon.

Which test?

At this time, there are two different tests to determine if someone is currently infected with COVID-19, PCR tests and antigen tests. Antigen tests are not widely available and they are not as accurate as PCR tests. Staff and residents will be tested using a PCR test. This test is safe and reliable. For the PCR test, a swab is used to collect a sample from the nose. At the lab, a test is run to see if there are pieces of viral genetic material (RNA) in the sample. A positive test is when there is viral genetic material detected. A negative test is when there is no viral genetic material detected. (The virus that causes COVID-19 is called SARS-CoV-2. You may see the name of the virus on some lab reports.)

Swab where?

A sample for COVID-19 testing can be collected from swabbing the front of the nose (anterior nasal), the middle part of the nose (mid-turbinate) and the very back of the nose (nasopharyngeal). The site of specimen collection also depends on the type of swab being used.

Who will perform the swabbing?

For testing at The Virginia Home on June 26, 2020, medical personnel from the Virginia National Guard will be collecting the specimens. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will help coordinate the testing.



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What does a negative result mean?

A negative result means that a person is unlikely to be infected with COVID-19 at the time of testing. The person can still get infected with COVID-19 in the future. As well, there is a small chance that the test is negative but the person actually has COVID-19 (false negative). For more information, review the following guidance from the VDH:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/182/2020/05/VDH-COVID-19-Viral-Test-Results-Infographic.v4.pdf>

What does a positive test mean?

A positive test means that the person is very likely to be infected with COVID-19. There is a very small chance that the test could be positive but the person does not have COVID-19 (false positive).

Potential Risks?

Potential risks include discomfort during swabbing and possible incorrect results (false negatives and false positives).

Potential Benefits?

Potential benefits include knowing if any resident or staff member has COVID-19 so that we can take actions to decrease spread within the facility.

How long does it take to get a result?

A PCR test can take anywhere from 1 to 5 days to get a result, depending on the lab. For testing at The Virginia Home on 6/26/2020, the specimens will be run at the DCLS (state lab). Results are usually available in about 48 hours.

Test how often?

If there are any residents or staff found to have COVID-19, then it is possible that testing will be repeated every week. Testing would stop when there are no new cases over a period of 14 days. If there are no new cases found on testing done 6/26/20, then it is possible that testing will be repeated one more time before entering Phase 2 of nursing home reopening.

How will residents or families get the result?

The result of the tests will be sent to the medical director and the nursing management team. If a test is positive or if we do not yet have a result, a member of the nursing management team will call/notify the resident/family member. We will then announce by email that the results are available. If a resident or family member does not get a call, then they will know that the test result was negative.

What if I have additional questions?

Please see links included in this document. You may also call or email our Infection Preventionist, Suzanne Cure or Director of Nursing, Colleen Lobb. Suzanne can be reached at ext. 219 or suzannecure@thevirginiahome.org. Colleen can be reached at ext. 251 or colleen.lobb@thevirginiahome.org.