COVID-19 Testing recommendations – Whitehorse 2020-07-15

At this time, there is no evidence of community spread of COVID-19 in Yukon. As we begin to re-open to other provinces and territories, the interactions between populations will change. As a result, early detection and tracing of COVID-19 cases and contacts is a critical public health strategy to help maintain our goal of case detection and containment.

1. **Test individuals with new symptoms compatible with COVID-19, however mild**:

   The most commonly found COVID-19 symptoms include:

• **Fever**	• **Sore throat**	• **Loss of appetite**
• **Chills**	• **Loss of sense of taste or smell**	• **Nausea and vomiting**
• **Cough***	• **Headache**	• **Diarrhea**
• **Shortness of breath**	• **Fatigue**	• **Muscle aches**
• **Runny nose**		

   *or acute exacerbation of a chronic cough

Less common symptoms of COVID-19 infection may include: stuffy nose, conjunctivitis, dizziness, confusion, abdominal pain, skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes.

COVID-19 is part of a differential diagnosis and clinical judgment is important in the work up of individuals presenting with these symptoms. Please remember to consider other possible diagnoses in the evaluation of the patient. **Where there is a reasonable alternate explanation, such as predictable COPD exacerbation, seasonal allergies, and otherwise no exposure risk, testing is at discretion of the provider. All patients who are tested for COVID-19 must self-isolate.**

Immediate management of all persons tested:
- ✓ Direct patient to self-isolate and provide standardized information sheet (step 3).
- ✓ Inform them they will followed by YCDC (step 3).
- ✓ Report. **All persons investigated must be reported by fax to YCDC.** Fax COVID reporting form or outpatient assessment form including current phone number to YCDC 667-8349 (step 4).
  Monday to Friday 830-430: YCDC 667-8323 or 667-5080
  Weekends, holidays and after hours: MOH on call 332-6922

It is particularly important to test symptomatic individuals who belong to certain populations:
- Individuals who have travelled outside Yukon in the past 14 days
- Contacts of a known COVID-19 case
- Residents or staff of long-term care homes
- Healthcare workers and other essential services providers
- Patients who are admitted or likely to be admitted to hospital
- Individuals living in congregate settings such as: work-camps, shelters, group homes, correctional facilities
- Individuals who are homeless or without stable housing
- Individuals living in rural Yukon communities
- Individuals of any age, who have a chronic medical condition, or are immunocompromised due to medication or treatment

Testing is not recommended in asymptomatic individuals unless directed by YCDC/MOH

Immediate reporting by phone call is required for all persons investigated who may be part of a larger Yukon cluster: hospitalized cases, long term care facilities (residents or staff), health care providers, large gatherings or greater than 5 close contacts.

2. **How to test**: collect specimen, complete the BCCDC PHL virology requisition, write "COVID-19" on requisitions. Collection options:

    - red top viral collection kits,
    - Hologic Aptima (unisex urethral swabs CT/GC NAAT) has been validated by BCCDC for respiratory viral including COVID-19

    Specimen:
    - In the outpatient setting, collect 1 Nasopharyngeal swab (NP)
    - **Patients with severe respiratory illness or hospitalized patients should have multiple samples collected: a NP and a Throat Swab or sputum, endotracheal aspirate, or Bronchoalveolar lavage.**

To prioritize results, include on the requisition if the individual is in one of the following priority groups:
Hospital (label as HOSP)   Long-term care (label as LTCF)   Health Care Worker (label as HCW)

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3. **All persons tested for COVID-19 should be isolated from others**

    Patients requiring hospitalization: placed in a separate room on contact and droplet precautions Patients well enough to go home must be provided education and placed on home isolation.

    Provide the attached handout *Information about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) Self-isolating at home* let them know that YCDC will contact them.

    If the person being investigated requires direct care in the home setting (i.e. children, elderly), also provide *Information about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) for caregivers.*

    Patients in Whitehorse will be followed by YCDC.

4. **Notify YCDC of all persons tested for COVID-19**

    YCDC will support persons on home isolation, who have meet the testing criteria and inform them of their test results. Home isolation is critical to controlling community spread of this virus.

For more information:

Yukon health care provider guidance documents, including patient handouts are found at:
http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/health_professionals_guidelines.php

Public information is available at: https://yukon.ca/covid-19