

NVCH Explains COVID-19 Testing Process and Cost

As Nemaha Valley Community Hospital (NVCH) continues to prepare for the potential spread of the COVID-19 into Nemaha County it is important to know that even though NVCH has the ability to collect the samples for the COVID-19 virus test, it is sometimes not necessary to be tested. According to the CDC most people will have a mild illness and will be able to recover at home without medical care. These people should isolate themselves at home for at least seven days after the onset of symptoms or for 72 hours after being fever free, whichever is longer.

“Testing for COVID-19 may not always be appropriate for everyone,” said Dr. Bartkoski, Chief of Staff at NVCH. “The decision to order a COVID-19 test is based on several factors, including clinical judgement and information gathered from the CDC Human Infection with 2019 Novel Coronavirus Person Under Investigation (PUI) and Case Report Form. This form is a questionnaire that we are required to complete prior to your visit with a medical provider.”

If a medical provider orders a COVID-19 test for you, one of our lab technicians will collect your sample with a COVID-19 swab test after they assist you in filling out another form which is required by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). If you meet the requirements of the Person Under Investigation and KDHE, your lab test will be sent to the KDHE testing lab at no cost to the patient. It is important to note that all the criteria established for testing by KDHE must be met before KDHE will test your sample.

After you fill out both questionnaires staff will determine if you meet the criteria for KDHE or not. If you do not meet the requirements, NVCH will send your test to our reference lab. Unfortunately, tests run at a private lab are not free, which means we will bill your health insurance or you \$100 for the cost of the test. If you do not have insurance there is financial assistance available.

For now, only patients being deemed as a “priority” are tested by KDHE. Please note, this is not something labs or staff have input or control over. Testing is highly regulated.

The criteria to be deemed “priority” is as follows:

- Healthcare workers and first responders who have COVID-19 symptoms
- Potential clusters of unknown respiratory illness, with priority given to long-term care facilities and healthcare facilities
- Hospitalized patients with no alternative diagnosis
- Individuals over the age of 60 who have symptoms of COVID-19 with priority given to people who reside in a nursing home, long-term care facility, or other congregate setting

- Individuals with underlying health conditions that would be treated differently if they were infected with COVID-19.

To stay up to date on the latest trends and information regarding COVID-19 please refer to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. You can find the latest information on their website at <https://govstatus.egov.com/coronavirus> or follow their press conferences on WIBW. Governor Kelly and KDHE are holding press conferences Monday through Friday at 2:00 pm.

If you have any of the COVID-19 symptoms including - Fever of 100.4° or more, cough or shortness of breath call our hotline at 785-336-0399 before you come to the hospital.

For general COVID-19 questions please call the Kansas Department of Health and Environment hotline at 866-534-3463 or visit www.cdc.gov.