

**Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Standing Order for COVID-19  
Lab Testing Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**  
*September 22, 2020*

**Q: What is the DHHS Standing Order for COVID-19 Lab Testing?**

A: The Standing Order is a Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) physician's order that authorizes lab testing for COVID-19 to be performed without an assessment or direct order from a health care provider and that may be used by an individual in Maine who seeks testing for COVID-19. The DHHS Standing Order complements but does not replace your relationship with your health care provider. It also does not require all health care providers or COVID-19 test collection sites to provide you a test.

**Q: Where can I get a copy of the Standing Order?**

A: The Standing Order is available on the Maine CDC website:

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/documents/StandingOrder-Sept-2020-Update.pdf>

**Q: Why would I need to use the Standing Order?**

A: The Standing Order serves a number of purposes. It allows for certain individuals over the age of 12 months to undergo COVID-19 testing without a direct order from a health care provider. It helps people who do not have a primary health care provider, cannot discuss potential exposure in a timely way with their health care provider, or are visiting Maine or coming back to Maine from another state, for example. Individuals continue to be encouraged to contact their health care provider to discuss their need for a COVID-19 test, especially if they have symptoms, to get an order for the test from their provider when indicated.

**Q. Why is the Department changing the Standing Order to allow anyone in Maine to get tested for COVID-19?**

A. Testing capacity in Maine has now expanded enough to make COVID-19 tests available for individuals who think they need one. Anyone who believes they could have COVID-19, or could have been exposed to COVID-19, among others, may get a test using the Standing Order. The Standing Order dated September 21, 2020, replaces the Standing Order dated June 18, 2020.

**Q: What types of testing does the Standing Order cover?**

A: The Maine DHHS Standing Order for COVID-19 testing covers only molecular testing for COVID-19 (e.g., PCR, isothermal) and antigen testing. It does not include antibody testing, which has not been proven to be reliable.

**Q. The Standing Order newly includes rapid antigen tests. When should they be used?**

The clinical performance of rapid antigen diagnostic tests largely depends on the circumstances in which they are used. Rapid antigen tests perform best when the person is tested in the early stages of infection with coronavirus when viral load is generally highest. They also may be informative when the person has a known exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19. Antigen tests are relatively inexpensive and can be used at the point-of-care. The currently authorized devices return results in approximately 15 minutes. Antigen tests for SARS-CoV-2 are generally less sensitive than viral tests that detect nucleic acid using reverse transcription polymerase chain

reaction (RT-PCR). More information may be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antigen-tests-guidelines.html>

**Q: I'm not sick but I believe that I may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. I called my health care provider's office and they said they can't order a test for me. Can I get tested at a site operating under the Standing Order?**

A: Yes. While it is always best to talk with your health care provider about your need for a COVID-19 test, you may get a test at a site operating under the Standing Order if you believe you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

**Q. Should everyone now get a COVID-19 test?**

A. No. Just because people can get tested doesn't mean that they should get tested. Maine CDC does not recommend people get tested just for peace of mind before visiting another household or attending a gathering. This is because you could already have been exposed but been tested too early for the virus to be detected, or you could be exposed to COVID-19 after getting tested. Testing alone is not [prevention](#), and a negative test does not necessarily mean it's safe to gather with others. The U.S. CDC does not advise frequent testing in most circumstances. Recommendations on testing can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html>.

**Q. Can children get tested under the Standing Order?**

A. Yes, children over 12 months of age may get a test under the Standing Order. Policies on minimum age for testing vary among locations, so individuals should check with a testing site before seeking a test for anyone under 18. Children 12 months and younger should see a health care provider for a COVID-19 test.

**Q: Where can I get a COVID-19 lab test using the Standing Order?**

A: A number of test collection sites in Maine offer COVID-19 testing to individuals under the Standing Order, even if the test collection site is not the individual's usual health care provider. It is always best to call a test collection site before going to schedule an appointment, which is typically required. The State of Maine has also contracted with private organizations to establish "Swab & Send" sites at a wide range of locations around the state. Those sites use the Standing Order to collect COVID-19 specimens and send the specimens to the Maine CDC State lab for testing. A list of testing locations providing testing under the Standing Order, including "Swab and Send" sites can be found on the [Keep Maine Healthy website](#).

**Q. Can a test collection site decline to provide a COVID-19 test to an individual seeking one under the standing order?**

A: Yes. Some test collection sites, such as hospitals, may limit their testing to certain individuals such as those who are patients or those who have symptoms or confirmed exposure to an individual with COVID-19.

**Q: I'm not sick, but I attended a large gathering of people. Should I get tested at a site operating under the Standing Order?**

A: Yes, because of the potential for exposure to COVID-19.

**Q: Do I need to be a resident of Maine to use the Standing Order?**

A: No, so long as you get the test within Maine.

**Q: I live in Maine but I recently traveled to another state that has a high prevalence of COVID-19. Can I use the Standing Order to get a test when I return to Maine?**

A: Yes. Under an Executive Order and the Keep Maine Healthy Plan, anyone who is arriving in Maine from nonexempt states may forgo the 14- day quarantine requirement if the individual has a negative result from a test taken no longer than 72 hours prior to arrival in Maine. If the test is taken in Maine, the individual must quarantine while awaiting the result. Anyone arriving from exempt states does not need to quarantine or get a test. For a list of exempted states, visit <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine/keepmainehealthy/faqs>.

**Q: I live in another state and want to come to Maine (e.g., for a vacation, to visit family, or for non-essential work). Can I use the Standing Order to get a test?**

A: Yes. Under an Executive Order and the Keep Maine Healthy Plan, anyone who is arriving in Maine from nonexempt states may forgo the 14-day quarantine requirement if the individual has a negative test result from a test taken no longer than 72 hours prior to arrival in Maine. If the test is taken in Maine, the individual must quarantine while awaiting the result. Anyone arriving in Maine from exempt states does not need to quarantine or get a test.

**Q: I work at a group home or long-term care nursing facility where periodic staff testing is required. Can I get a COVID-19 test under the Standing Order?**

A: Yes. The federal government requires periodic staff testing at nursing homes. Employees and others in nursing facilities may get tested under the Standing Order.

**Q: How will I get the results of my COVID-19 test if I use the Standing Order?**

A: All facilities collecting specimens for COVID-19 testing are responsible for contacting individuals with the results of their lab test. The Maine CDC State lab will not provide individuals with their results directly.

**Q: Can I send a sample to or get a sample collected at the Maine CDC State lab?**

A: No. The State lab only conducts the test on samples taken from test collection sites that have established relationships with it.

**Q: Will I need to pay for a COVID-19 lab test if I'm getting tested under the Standing Order?**

A: Generally, for the duration of the national public health emergency, the Federal government requires all types of health insurance coverage to pay for COVID-19 testing with no out-of-pocket charges to individuals. The Maine Bureau of Insurance also clarified coverage of COVID-19 testing requirements for State-regulated plans in a Bulletin available on its website ([https://www.maine.gov/pfr/insurance/legal/bulletins/index\\_by\\_number.html](https://www.maine.gov/pfr/insurance/legal/bulletins/index_by_number.html)) . Individuals should confirm coverage with their health plan directly as well as ask about any payments that may be required at the test collection site. Additionally, the State of Maine will cover the full costs of specimen collection and lab testing for any COVID-19 lab test that is done at one of the State-contracted "Swab & Send" sites through at least October 31, 2020.

**Q. Does the clarification of who can get tested under the standing order change insurance coverage in Maine for COVID-19 tests?**

A. No. As a revised Bulletin from the Bureau of Insurance explains, health insurance carriers regulated by the State of Maine must cover COVID-19 tests for preventive and diagnostic purposes, but not for surveillance testing. Surveillance testing is asymptomatic, community- or population-level testing to understand the incidence or prevalence of the disease in a group (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/pooling-procedures.html>). Insurance carriers are not required to cover periodic testing by employers, including testing which is federally required such as that of nursing facility staff.