



## 10 Things You Should Know about SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19

**Note: SARS-CoV-2 is the name of the virus, COVID-19 is the name of the illness.**

- 1. It may be novel, but it's from the same viral family as SARS, MERS, OC43 and HKU1.**
  - The virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2), belongs to the betacoronaviruses, one of the four genera of coronaviruses.
  - Knowing a little about this genera helps public health officials understand basic concepts about COVID-19, such as the approximate range of the virus's [incubation period](#).
- 2. Commercially available tests that detect OC43, HKU1, or MERS *will not* detect the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2).**
  - This is good, in that the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) will not be detected by tests that target seasonal coronaviruses, such as OC43, HKU1, 229E or NL63.
  - The following manufacturers have completed *in silico* analyses of the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) against their platforms and state that they will not have cross-reactivity to seasonal coronaviruses: Biofire® FilmArray® (Respiratory Panel, Pneumonia Panel), GenMark Dx® (Respiratory Panel), and Luminex® (xTAG® RPP, NxTAG® RPP).
- 3. Standard BSL-2 facilities and work practices can be used with potential COVID-19 specimens.**
  - A certified [BSC should be employed](#) when aliquoting specimens, inoculating media, performing diagnostic testing, extracting nucleic acids, and preparing slides.
  - Viral culture of potential COVID-19 specimens is *strongly* discouraged at this time.
- 4. [Specimens](#) from suspect COVID-19 cases can be [shipped Category B](#).**
- 5. [Healthcare workers](#) are being advised to wear gloves, gowns, respiratory protection and eye protection when working with patients of known or suspected COVID-19 infection.**
- 6. There have been a number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the United States. Please see the [CDC website](#) for current case counts.**
  - Indiana does not have any confirmed cases of COVID-19.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) is not actively spreading in the United States at this time, and the CDC's main objective is to aggressively use evidence-based measures to [prevent additional transmission](#). To meet this objective, public health officials are performing extensive contact tracing on all positive cases and persons under investigation.
- Should the nature of transmission in the United States change, the testing priorities and protocols will be updated.
- Respiratory viral testing is not required prior to COVID-19 specimens being submitted *if* the respiratory viral testing will delay delivery of the COVID-19 specimens to the ISDH Laboratories (ISDHL).

**7. Testing is only available at CDC.**

- All testing must be pre-approved by ISDH.
- For patients meeting both the clinical features and epidemiologic risk criteria for COVID-19, consultation and testing authorization is available at (317) 233-7125. After hours number – (317) 233-1325.
- [Specimens](#) for testing must be shipped through ISDHL.
- An updated [Virology LimsNet form](#) will be available for COVID-19 testing this week.
- Specimens arriving at the ISDHL during normal business hours (8:15 a.m.-4:45 p.m. M-F) will be shipped priority overnight to CDC. Specimens received after hours on Friday will be shipped the following Monday, except as authorized by the CDC.
- CDC testing results will only be reported back to ISDHL. ISDH will then relay the report to the submitter via LimsNet. It will be the responsibility of the submitter to relay all laboratory results to the patient's healthcare provider.

**8. ISDHL plans to offer COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 testing as soon as possible.**

- CDC issued a SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR by emergency use authorization (EUA) to public health laboratories on Feb. 4, 2020. ISDHL received the testing materials to validate the EUA on Feb. 7, 2020.
- ISDHL attempted to verify the SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR on Feb. 10 but encountered the same issues with the assay observed by other public health laboratories nationwide. ISDHL immediately contacted CDC to report these issues and was instructed to discontinue verification until updated reagents could be supplied by CDC.
- CDC estimates the updated testing materials will be available next week.

**9. We're here to help. Email questions to [ISDHLabInfo](#).**

**10. Please see the [ISDH COVID-19 website](#) for up-to-date information and guidance.**