



Indiana State Department of Health

Criteria to guide evaluation of patients for COVID-19

Public health officials and healthcare providers should consider a novel coronavirus infection as a potential etiology among high-risk persons, including persons with known close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case or travel to [countries with a CDC level 2 or 3 health notice](#) due to COVID-19. ISDH has established the following criteria to guide evaluation of patients for COVID-19:

Risk Category	Clinical Features	AND	Required Criteria
Close Contacts with Confirmed Cases	Fever ¹ or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)	AND	Any person, including healthcare workers, who has had close contact with a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 patient ² within 14 days of symptom onset. Can also include those who have received some official notification that they attended an event or cruise where COVID-19 cases have been diagnosed.
Healthcare Workers	Fever ¹ and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)	AND	A history of travel from affected level 2 or 3 geographic areas ³ (see below) within 14 days of symptom onset. Does not require hospitalization. No respiratory viral panel needed.
Travelers	Fever ¹ and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)	AND	A history of travel from affected level 2 or 3 geographic areas ³ (see below) within 14 days of symptom onset. Requires evaluation by a healthcare provider.
No Exposure	Fever ¹ with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza)	AND	Patient is hospitalized with a severity of illness that requires critical interventions. Ideally, respiratory viral panel negative (consider time to results).

¹Fever may be subjective or confirmed

²Close contact is defined as:

- a) Being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case OR
- b) Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

If such contact occurs while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves, NIOSH-certified disposable N95 respirator, eye protection), criteria for PUI consideration are met.

³Relevant affected areas will be defined as a country with at least a CDC Level 2 Travel Health Notice. This currently includes Iran, Italy, South Korea, mainland China and Japan. Providers should refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/for-the-most-up-to-date-travel-health-notices>.



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If COVID-19 is suspected in a patient (as noted above), healthcare providers should immediately notify their local public health department AND the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) at (317) 233-7125 during from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) for consultation and testing authorization. For assistance after hours or on the weekends, contact (317) 233-1325 to reach the epidemiologist on call.

Patients suspected of having COVID-19 should be immediately placed in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR), if available. Healthcare providers should implement standard, contact, and airborne precautions (N95 respirator or PAPR), including eye protection (goggles or face shield) when caring for patients suspected of having COVID-19.

While the risk to the general American public is low, persons with travel to countries with widespread or sustained community spread are at elevated risk of exposure. As of March 6, 2020, the CDC identified the following geographic areas as having widespread or sustained community transmission of COVID-19:

- China (Level 3 Travel Health Notice) (not including Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan)
- Iran (Level 3 Travel Health Notice)
- Italy (Level 3 Travel Health Notice)
- Japan (Level 2 Travel Health Notice)
- South Korea (Level 3 Travel Health Notice)

The COVID-19 outbreak is a rapidly evolving situation, and additional countries may be added to this list if widespread or sustained community transmission is identified. Providers should visit the CDC's [website](#) for the most up-to-date COVID-19 travel health notices.

Please visit the ISDH Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) [webpage](#) for updated news and detailed guidance on the COVID-19 outbreak. We will be updating it weekly, or as new information becomes available. For additional epidemiology questions regarding COVID-19, please contact the ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center at 317-233-7125 or e-mail epiresource@isdh.in.gov.