Press Releases

COVID-19 Testing Expanded to All Symptomatic Rhode Islanders

With Rhode Island's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing capacity now expanded, all Rhode Islanders who have symptoms of COVID-19 are encouraged to call a healthcare provider to get scheduled for a test. It is critical that people who are experiencing symptoms also self-isolate and have as little contact with others as possible.

The symptoms of COVID-19 include any of these symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches (myalgias), chills, runny nose or stuffy nose, sore throat, headache, or diarrhea. People with COVID-19 have experienced a range of different symptoms. As we learn more about the virus, we know that some people with COVID-19 have only experienced one or two mild symptoms.

Currently, a person can only be tested for COVID-19 in Rhode Island if testing is ordered by a healthcare provider. If you do not have a primary care provider, call an urgent care center. Call first before going to a healthcare facility (unless it is an emergency).

The expanded approach of testing all people with symptoms represents a significant change. COVID-19 testing in Rhode Island had previously been limited to the members of certain priority populations who are more vulnerable to complications from COVID-19 (such as nursing home residents), or who are members of Rhode Island's critical infrastructure workforce (such as healthcare workers). This increase in testing capacity gives Rhode Island the opportunity to test more people with symptoms and to get a better idea of how much virus is circulating in Rhode Island.

The expanded number of tests that Rhode Island can now process are being run at RIDOH's State Health Laboratories and at several hospital and private laboratories.

COVID-19 Data Update

Key messages for the public

- Anyone who is sick should stay home and self-isolate (unless going out for testing or healthcare).

- The people who live with that person and who have been in direct close contact with that person should self-quarantine for 14 days. Direct close contact means being within approximately 6 feet of a person for a prolonged period.

- Help is available for people living in quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19. Visit www.RIDelivers.com for connections to groceries, home supplies, restaurants, and mutual aid groups. People can also call 2-1-1.

- Groups of more than five people should not be gathering. Always avoid close personal contact with other people in public.

- Healthcare workers should not be going to work if they are sick (even with mild symptoms).

- Through April 13th, there will be no on-site food consumption for restaurants, bars, coffee shops, or other food establishments in Rhode Island. (Establishments with a food license can continue to conduct pick-up, drive-thru and delivery only.)

- People without symptoms should not be tested for COVID-19. Testing individuals with no symptoms is not recommended by CDC.

- People who think they have COVID-19 should call their healthcare provider. Do not go directly to a healthcare facility without first calling a healthcare provider (unless you are experiencing a medical emergency).

- Early data suggest that older adults are twice as likely to experience serious COVID-19 illness.

- People with general, non-medical questions about COVID-19 can visit www.health.ri.gov/covid, write to RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov, or call 401-222-8022. This is the COVID-19 Hotline that RIDOH has available to the public.

- Everyone can help stop the spread of viruses in Rhode Island.

Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same.

Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.

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Department or agency: Department of Health
Online: http://www.health.ri.gov (http://www.health.ri.gov)
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