



# Southeastern Idaho Public Health

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 20, 2020**

**Contact: Tracy McCulloch**  
**(208)239-5250**

## **The Current Picture of Testing in Southeast Idaho**

SOUTHEAST IDAHO- The demand for testing by people who have mild symptoms is putting a strain on healthcare systems. Test materials and personal protective equipment are being used at a faster rate than normal because of the demand. The community is encouraged to allow the limited supplies to be used for the sickest and highest risk patients.

The people who have the greatest need to be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19 are:

- People who are hospitalized and have signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- People who have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and are at higher risk for severe disease. Those at higher risk include: Adults over the age of 60 and people with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, and kidney disease.
- People with signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and are current health care workers

Eighty percent of people who get COVID-19 will have mild to moderate symptoms and recover without needing special treatment. “A positive test for the virus that causes COVID-19 will not change a healthcare provider's recommendations for medical treatment unless the patient is very sick and hospitalized,” said the Southeastern Idaho Public Health Director, Maggie Mann. “People should seek care if they are very sick; otherwise, they should be encouraged to stay at home self-isolate, if possible and treat the symptoms.”

Testing for the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is being done on a patient-by-patient basis. Epidemiologists at the state and local public health districts are in consultation with healthcare providers and will facilitate testing at the state lab for high-risk patients. Since influenza is still widely circulating and has similar symptoms, rapid flu tests will generally be recommended to rule out the flu before proceeding with coronavirus testing. Healthcare providers can order appropriate testing, and samples will be sent to the state lab or to a private lab.

In addition to the State Lab, three large commercial labs (LabCorp, Quest Diagnostics, and UW Medicine) are accepting Idaho samples for testing. There may be a cost associated with this testing. Labs will report their results to the state, and those numbers will be posted at [coronavirus.idaho.gov](http://coronavirus.idaho.gov) once a day. For the State Lab, it is normal for test results to take 2-5 days to be delivered. For the commercial labs, it is 7 – 10 days for a result.

“A negative test today for the novel coronavirus is no guarantee -- you could be exposed tomorrow, or the next day. That's why testing is limited to those showing symptoms,” said Mann.

For more information regarding COVID-19 visit [siphidaho.org](http://siphidaho.org) or call the hotline at 208.234.5875.