



STANDING ORDER FOR COVID-19 TESTING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a standing order for COVID-19 testing?

A standing order is a medical directive issued by a physician, in this case by the New Jersey Department of Health, which is not specific to one person. Any individual who meets the criteria included in a standing order may receive the treatment or procedures stated in the Order without having to obtain a prescription from a health care provider.

2. How do I view or obtain a copy of the Department of Health's standing order for COVID-19 testing?

The standing order may be accessed at the Department of Health website:

https://nj.gov/health/legal/covid19/05-12-2020_StandingOrder_COVID19testing.pdf.

3. Can the standing order for COVID-19 testing be used instead of a prescription?

Yes, if the individual meets the eligibility criteria set forth in the standing order and the testing site accepts the standing order. The individual must be (1) a resident of or currently residing in New Jersey; (2) 12 months of age or older; (3) exposed to or potentially exposed to SARS-COV-2 within the incubation period AND must fall within one of the following categories:

- Persons who had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 10 minutes) with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 (with or without symptoms).
- Healthcare facility workers and first responders (with or without symptoms).
- Residents and workers in congregate living settings, including but not limited to jails, prisons, group homes and homeless shelters (with or without symptoms).
- Persons with symptoms of COVID-19 infection, including fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, recent loss of taste or smell, vomiting or diarrhea and/or sore throat.
- Populations identified by the Department of Health for surveillance purposes at the discretion of the Department:
https://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID_Testing_Guidance.pdf.
- Persons without symptoms of COVID-19 infection who are prioritized by health departments or clinicians, for any reason. This would include but is not limited to those experiencing homelessness, seasonal farm workers, or other individuals for whom a medical provider has not prescribed a COVID-19 test.

4. How do I use the standing order/ how do I know which testing sites accept the standing order? (for individuals)

First, it is recommended that you check with the testing site that you are planning to visit to determine if the site accepts the standing order. Certain testing sites may not be able to accept the standing order to test individuals without symptoms, may require additional information or may otherwise limit the population of individuals that they intend to service for testing. Testing sites that accept the standing order for COVID-19 testing in place of a prescription will already have access to the standing order. You may print out a copy of the standing order to bring with you to the testing site but it is not necessary to do so.

5. How do I use the standing order? (for testing sites)

Make a determination if you are able to process tests using a standing order based upon what the laboratory processing the tests will accept and make sure to update this information on your website, voice recording etc.

Testing sites can use the standing order in the same way they use a prescription. Place the name of the physician who signed the standing order as the ordering physician, collect other information from the patient as you normally do and perform the test.

6. Can my insurance be billed for testing under the standing order? (for individuals)

Federal law requires insurance coverage with no out of pocket costs for COVID-19 diagnostic testing for the duration of the national public health emergency. Federal guidance notes that coverage of the COVID-19 test (and related items and services) is only required “when medically appropriate for the individual, as determined by the individual’s attending health care provider.” The New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance further clarified coverage of COVID-19 testing in Bulletin No. 20-24, which provides that carriers must cover, without cost-sharing, and without prior authorization or other medical management requirements, any SARS-COV-2 molecular test authorized pursuant to the DOH standing order (https://www.state.nj.us/dobi/bulletins/blt20_24.pdf). Because not all health plans are required to comply with Bulletin No. 20-24, insurance coverage may not apply to testing under the standing order. An individual should confirm coverage with their health plan directly as well as ask about any payments that may be required at the test collection site. An individual should also check with the testing site to make sure the site accepts the individual’s insurance.

7. Can insurance be billed for patients tested under the standing order? (for testing sites)

State and federal law require insurance coverage with no out of pocket costs for COVID-19 diagnostic testing. However, based upon federal guidance insurance coverage may not apply. You should submit a bill to the applicable health plan or insurer for a determination of coverage.

8. Can the standing order be used for individuals without insurance?

Individuals without health insurance can access testing with the standing order at many community-based and local testing sites. In most instances, this testing is provided without charge. Locations can be found here: <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/testing>

Access to funding for providers to support coverage for individuals without health insurance coverage is available at the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA): <https://www.hrsa.gov/CovidUninsuredClaim>.

Information for the uninsured or undocumented residents:
https://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID-19_Resources_forUndocumented_and_UninsuredFactsheet.pdf

9. Is there an application or a charge for using the standing order?

No. There is no application process or fee for using the standing order instead of a prescription.

10. Do all testing sites and laboratories accept the Department of Health standing order instead of a prescription?

No. Whether a testing site and/or a laboratory processing the tests will accept the standing order instead of a prescription for COVID-19 testing may vary according to location. You should check with a testing site beforehand to determine if they accept the standing order.

11. Am I required to use the standing order to obtain a test for COVID-19?

No. Individuals are not required to use the standing order instead of a prescription for COVID-19 testing. If an individual obtains a prescription from a healthcare provider for COVID-19 testing, there is no need to use or rely on the standing order.

12. Can the standing order be used for antibody testing?

No, the standing order is not to be used for antibody testing. There is still a lot about the serology of the virus that remains unknown. The New Jersey Department of Health recommends against using any antibody testing to attempt to diagnose current or past infection with SARS-CoV-2.