# Testing at Independent Senior Housing: Frequently Asked Questions

## What should I do if I have an outbreak of COVID-19 in my location?

Please contact the DPH Epidemiology line (617-983-6800).

## Who should be tested?

**Individuals who develop symptoms** of COVID-19, **OR** who are a **close contact of someone who has tested positive** for COVID-19, should be tested. Symptoms may include:

* Fever, or chills
* Signs of a lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, lowered oxygen saturation)
* Fatigue, sore throat, headache, body aches/myalgia, nasal congestion or new loss of sense of taste or smell
* Other less common symptoms can include gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g. nausea, vomiting, diarrhea), rash, and inflammatory conditions such as “COVID toes”
* In older or chronically ill individuals, symptoms of COVID-19 may be subtle such as alterations in mental status or in blood glucose control

**Who is a close contact?**

You are a close contact of a COVID-19 positive person if:

* You were within 6 feet of them, and
* For at least 10-15 minutes, and
* While they were symptomatic **OR** within the 48 hours before their symptom onset

***The Commonwealth does not recommend universal testing for situations in which all individuals on-site are asymptomatic and with no known cases.***

## How can an individual get tested at a test site?

* You can visit this [interactive testing map](https://memamaps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=eba3f0395451430b9f631cb095febf13) to find a site near you. Please call the test site prior to arrival; sites may require pre-screening, a referral and/or an appointment.
* The list of test sites [is also available here.](https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-testing-sites/download)The list changes regularly, so check in for periodic updates.
* Free testing is also available for all Massachusetts residents through the Commonwealth’s [Stop the Spread](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread) program. [Visit the website](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread) to find a site near you.

## How can residents test themselves at home?

1. Visit the [COVID-19 Testing Guidance webpage](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-testing-guidance)
2. Navigate to the “[Testing Options for Entities](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-testing-guidance#testing-options-for-entities-)” section
3. In the checkboxes, select:
   * Who do you want to test? 🡪 **Residents of Senior Housing Facilities**
   * Testing location(s)🡪 **Via mail-in specimen**
   * Specimen collection🡪 **Self-collected (patient)**
4. Hit “Search”
5. This will display options/contact information for providers of self-collected, at-home testing

## I would like on-site testing, is there an associated cost?

* COVID-19 testing for **symptomatic individuals** and **close contacts** should be covered by insurance. Insurance coverage for **on-site mobile specimen collection performed by EMS or a provider** may vary:
  + For MassHealth members, mobile testing is covered. Be sure to check with the provider prior to scheduling testing regarding their ability to bill MassHealth.
  + For non-MassHealth members (including Medicare), there may be an associated cost. You should ask your testing provider or your insurance provider about their policies before arranging testing.

## Insurance is unlikely to pay for the testing of an **asymptomatic individual with no known contact with COVID-19. This type of testing is generally paid for privately**.Ask the testing provider and your insurance company about their policies before arranging testing.

## How can I arrange on-site testing for my independent senior housing?

* **Identify and contact a testing partner who will come to your site:** 
  + A [**Community Health Center**](https://www.massleague.org/findahealthcenter/index.php) near you
  + Visit the [COVID-19 Testing Guidance webpage](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-testing-guidance) and navigate to the “[Testing Options for Entities](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-testing-guidance#testing-options-for-entities-)” section to search for provider options
* **When choosing a testing provider, you should inquire about the sample collection method offered** (e.g., anterior nasal swabs may be more comfortable than nasopharyngeal swabs, elderly residents may not be able to produce necessary saliva volumes for saliva-based testing, etc.).  Please discuss options with the potential testing provider.

## Where can I go to find more information?

There is a dedicated [web page](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-testing) about testing resources in the Commonwealth.

If you are a testing provider and would like to be added to this list of testing options, please complete [this form](https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-testing-resource-submission/download). This list will be updated regularly.