



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 TESTING FOR CITY OF BOSTON EMPLOYEES

Getting Tested is *Fast, Easy, and Safe.*

**#GetTheTestBoston**

## SHOULD I GET TESTED FOR COVID-19?

The Boston Public Health Commission currently advises individuals who have interacted with persons outside their home to get tested, even if they don't have symptoms, but:

- **Especially** those experiencing COVID-like symptoms
- **Especially** those at high risk for complications from COVID-19
- **Especially** those who were in close contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19
- **Especially** those who have traveled or been in large gatherings

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus, and can range from mild to severe.

## HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

COVID-19 spreads easily through close contact from person to person, including between people who are physically near each other (within about 6 feet). It spreads through small droplets when a person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks or breathes. **People who are infected but do not show symptoms can spread the virus to others.**



These droplets can land on surfaces and a person may get COVID-19 by touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

There is growing evidence that droplets and airborne particles can remain suspended in the air and be breathed in by others, and travel distances beyond 6 feet. In general, indoor environments without good ventilation increase this risk.

These are the reasons that face coverings, social distancing, hand washing and washing of surfaces and not congregating in groups are critical to prevention of COVID.

### **WHY DO I NEED TO GET THE TEST IF I DON'T HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS, AND DON'T THINK I'VE BEEN EXPOSED?**

People with no symptoms can still be infected with COVID-19 and contribute to pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission, according to the CDC. You could have COVID-19 and be spreading it to other people without knowing it. If you get tested, you will know your COVID-19 status. This will help you make decisions that could save lives. So, right now, the City of Boston is encouraging both residents and our employees to do their part to stop the spread of COVID-19 by getting tested. If you haven't been tested for COVID-19 before, you should consider getting tested to protect yourself and others from the virus.

### **WHERE CAN I GET TESTED FOR COVID-19?**

The City of Boston is partnering with community health centers to increase access to testing, particularly in neighborhoods experiencing higher rates of COVID-19. Please note:

- There is FREE TESTING available to anyone regardless of symptoms at the City of Boston's mobile testing sites. Current mobile testing site locations are available on [boston.gov](https://www.boston.gov). These sites are available to anyone regardless of insurance.
- All sites are available regardless of immigration status and will not affect "public charge" rule determinations.
- Other neighborhood testing sites have different policies regarding the availability of asymptomatic testing and insurance coverage, so please call ahead via their listed [contact numbers](#) on the website to check their availability, and policies on asymptomatic testing and insurance coverage.
- Some sites require you to call ahead for pre-screening and to schedule an appointment.



[View our map of testing sites for more details.](#) If you live outside of Boston, or near a neighboring municipality, the State also has [a map of testing sites throughout Massachusetts that you are able to access.](#)

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should call your healthcare provider. This is especially important for individuals at high risk for complications from COVID-19.

### **WHICH SITES ARE OPEN DURING THE MORNINGS, AFTERNOONS AND/OR WEEKENDS?**

You can find the list of testing sites open each day and their hours on the City's [website](#) and on the map of [sites](#).

### **CAN I TAKE TIME OFF FROM WORK TO GET TESTED?**

The City of Boston is providing a [Temporary COVID-19 Paid Leave for Testing Policy](#), which offers benefit-eligible City employees up to one paid hour of paid leave every 14 days to get tested during their normal work hours. Employees will receive regular compensation for up to one hour of time spent testing, and will not be required to utilize sick or personal time for one hour of testing consistent with this Policy. Such leave is subject to operational needs.

All benefit eligible employees whether physically reporting to work, working remotely, or working a combination of both are eligible for this leave. Employees are eligible for this leave even in their probationary period. Employees on extended leaves of absence or on suspension are not entitled to such leave. Employees working remotely and/or those rotating into physical work locations must schedule testing on days and times they are working remotely.

### **IF I'D LIKE TO GET TESTED DURING WORK HOURS, HOW DO I USE THE CITY'S TEMPORARY COVID-19 PAID LEAVE FOR TESTING BENEFIT?**

In order to access this leave benefit employees must provide their supervisor/manager at least forty-eight (48) hours' notice and receive approval to use such leave. Existing departmental practices and policies governing how and to whom such notice should be given must be followed.

Employees are required to complete the [self-certification of COVID-19 testing form](#), which can also be found on the Hub, and submit it to their HR Manager/Director or Personnel Officer as part of their request.

### **CAN I GET TESTED MORE THAN ONCE DURING A 14 DAY PERIOD?**



Nothing prevents or discourages employees from getting tested more frequently than provided for in the [City's Temporary COVID-19 Paid Leave for Testing Policy](#). Employees who have been exposed or believe they are at risk should consult with their healthcare provider and receive testing as directed. Employees are simply limited to using this paid time off for one hour during a 14 day period. Employees requiring or seeking testing on a more frequent basis may use other existing applicable leave benefits.

### **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO GET TESTED?**

Testing at the City's **mobile testing sites** is completely free, regardless of insurance and regardless of symptoms.

At certain standing testing sites, the cost of symptomatic and asymptomatic tests may vary depending on your insurance provider. For City of Boston employees with either BCBS, Harvard Pilgrim, or Allways health plans, asymptomatic tests are not a covered benefit, but the mobile testing options are available to all. Employees are encouraged to contact a testing location before scheduling an appointment for more information about the costs associated with testing at that site. Employees may contact their Health Insurance Carrier Member Services to confirm coverage:

BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD PPO  
Member Services: 1-800-814-4370

HARVARD PILGRIM HEALTH CARE HMO  
Member Services: 1-888-333-4742

ALLWAYS HEALTH PARTNERS HMO  
Member Services: 1-800-462-5449

### **WHEN I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT TO GET A TEST, WHAT SHOULD I ASK THE PROVIDER?**

- Do I need to have symptoms to get tested?
- Will I be billed or is it free?
- Is it a walk-up or a drive-thru site?
- Do I need to make an appointment?
- When can I expect to get my results?

### **HOW SOON WILL I GET MY RESULTS?**

Timing for results varies based on where you get tested. You should ask your testing site about their results timeline for the most up to date information.

