



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 TESTING IN BOSTON

Getting Tested is Fast, Easy, and Safe.

#GetTheTestBoston

SHOULD I GET TESTED FOR COVID-19?

The City of Boston is encouraging everyone to get tested for COVID-19, regardless of symptoms. You should get tested if you:

- Are experiencing COVID-like symptoms
- Are at high risk for complications from COVID-19
- If you have been in contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19
- If you 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 important to prevention of COVID-19.

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

Right now, the City of Boston is encouraging residents to do their part to stop the spread of COVID-19, and a large part of stopping the spread is getting more people tested.

If you haven't been tested for COVID-19 before, you should consider getting tested to protect yourself and others from the virus. Residents with no symptoms can still be infected with COVID-19 and contribute to pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic transmission, according to the CDC. When individuals know their current COVID-19 status, this helps them make decisions that could save lives.

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, ASYMPTOMATIC, LOW-THRESHOLD TESTING at our mobile testing sites in the City. 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](#). Sites throughout Massachusetts are [available here](#).

CAN I TAKE TIME OFF FROM WORK TO GET TESTED?

Check with your employer to see if they offer any accommodations for testing.

For City of Boston employees, the City will be offering benefit eligible City employees up to one paid hour every 14 days to get tested during their normal work hours. Employees will receive regular compensation for their time spent testing, and will not be required to utilize sick or personal time for one hour of testing.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO GET TESTED?

Testing at the City of Boston's **mobile testing sites** is *completely free*. Test for symptomatic individuals is also free. Mobile site locations in Boston are [available on boston.gov](#).

At certain standing testing sites, the cost of 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.

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?

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.

For more information, visit boston.gov/coronavirus.

