

Considerations for Evaluating Patients for SARS-CoV-2

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TO:	Health Alert Network
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SUBJECT:	Considerations for Evaluating Patients for SARS-CoV-2
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This transmission is a “Health Advisory”, provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

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- Patients infected with SARS-CoV-2 may present with a variety of symptoms.
- In order to protect public health, it is important to consider COVID-19 in patients presenting with mild symptoms.
- This consideration is especially important in children and young adults.
- If a patient has been exposed to a case of COVID-19, it is recommended that they be tested 2-3 days after exposure, regardless of the presence of symptoms.

This Health Advisory provides recommendations and considerations for evaluating patients for SARS-CoV-2. Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) provides this guidance based on available information about COVID-19 and is subject to change.

Patients infected with SARS-CoV-2 report a wide range of symptoms across a spectrum of illness severity. While fever, cough, or shortness of breath are frequently reported among persons with COVID-19, [other symptoms](#) such as headache, congestion, rhinorrhea, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, chills, myalgia, headache, and fatigue are routine as well. Additionally, gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain are also commonly reported.

Many of these symptoms can be mild and mimic those associated with [seasonal allergies](#) or other viral syndromes. To help protect public health, it is imperative that patients presenting with even mild symptoms be evaluated for COVID-19, including an assessment of the patient’s history for potential exposures.

These considerations are especially important when assessing a child or young adult. Although children and young adults are [reportedly](#) at lower risk for severe disease and death from infection with SARS-CoV-2, younger persons can experience infection and subsequently transmit infection to those at higher risk for severe illness. Additionally, while they are at lower risk for severe disease, some children and

young adults experience serious illness, and asymptomatic or mild cases can result in sequelae such as myocardial inflammation or multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C).

Regardless of age, if a patient is identified as being a close contact of a COVID-19 case, it is strongly [recommended](#) that they be tested for SARS-CoV-2 at least 2-3 days after the exposure, regardless of the presence of symptoms. Information about insurance coverage and COVID-19 testing can be found [here](#).

If you have questions about this guidance, please call your local health department or **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)**.

Individuals interested in receiving further PA-HANs are encouraged to register at <https://han.pa.gov/>.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

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This information is current as of October 1, 2020 but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.