

NORTHEAST HEALTH DISTRICT

220 Research Drive • Athens, Georgia 30605 • 706-583-2870



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MEDIA RELEASE

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Contact: Sarah Peck
Phone number: 706-510-5438

Department of Public Health Expands COVID-19 Testing Criteria, Allowing More People to Be Tested

Athens, GA – The Department of Public Health has expanded testing criteria for COVID-19, allowing more people to be tested at the drive-through sites being operated by the Northeast Health District. The new guidelines allow the following individuals to be tested:

- People with symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath):
 - Healthcare workers, first responders, and other critical infrastructure workers
 - Persons residing in long-term care facilities or other group residential settings
 - Persons 65 years of age and older
 - Persons with underlying medical conditions
 - Household members or caregivers of any of the groups above
 - People with symptoms who are not a part of any of the groups above may also be approved for testing, as capacity allows

- People without symptoms who fall into the following categories (if capacity allows):
 - Healthcare workers, first responders, and other critical infrastructure workers that have been exposed to COVID-19
 - Residents of a long-term care facility or other group residential setting experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19

“The newly expanded criteria will allow us to identify more cases in the community, which will help protect our most vulnerable and guide future strategies aimed at stopping the spread of COVID-19,” explained Whitney Howell, Clinical and Nursing Director for the Northeast Health District.

If you are concerned about exposure to COVID-19, you should stay at home and call your healthcare provider, an urgent care center, or local federally qualified health center. The Northeast Health District also has a hotline available to screen and refer for testing: 706-340-0996. The hotline is answered by a Public Health nurse 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. Local providers who would like to refer patients may also call the nurse hotline.

For information about COVID-19, visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/novelcoronavirus> or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. For daily updated COVID-19 case counts, visit <https://dph.georgia.gov/covid-19-daily-status-report>.

For more information on the local response to COVID-19, visit bit.ly/NEHDCOVID19.

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