



GRANVILLE VANCE

public health

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TO: Health care providers testing for novel Coronavirus 19 (COVID-19)

FROM: Lisa Macon Harrison, MPH, Health Director, and Shauna Guthrie, MD, MPH, FAAFP, Medical Director

SUBJECT: Guidance re: antigen testing for COVID-19, universal source control measures, and isolation guidance for patients

With increasing cases of COVID-19 in North Carolina, and in Granville and Vance Counties, it is critical that we continue to increase access to testing to understand the spread of the disease and respond appropriately. We, at Granville Vance Public Health (GVPH), appreciate your ongoing partnership in this effort.

Several commercial manufacturers are developing SARS-CoV-2 antigen tests. While antigen tests are designed for rapid diagnosis of active infection, they are less sensitive than PCR-based methods. Due to the lower sensitivity, antigen tests are not recommended as a sole diagnostic test for COVID-19. Positive antigen tests should be considered an indication of likely SARS-CoV-2 infection and immediately reported to the state or local health departments per existing guidance. **Patients with a negative antigen test in whom SARS-CoV-2 infection is suspected should be tested using a different FDA authorized molecular method.**

The [CDC recommends implementing universal source control measures](#), cloth face coverings or facemasks to cover a person's mouth and nose, to prevent spread of respiratory secretions. Because of the potential for asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission, source control measures are recommended for everyone in a healthcare facility (patients, visitors, and employees), even if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

- Patients and visitors who do not wear their own cloth face covering should be offered a facemask or cloth face covering, as supplies allow.
 - Patients may remove their cloth face covering for necessary parts of medical examinations.
 - Facemasks and cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Healthcare employees with direct patient care should wear a medical facemask at all times while they are in the healthcare facility, including in breakrooms or other spaces where they might encounter co-workers.
 - When available, facemasks are preferred over cloth face coverings for HCP as facemasks offer both source control and protection for the wearer against exposure to splashes and sprays of infectious material from others. Cloth face coverings should NOT be worn instead of a respirator or facemask if more than source control is needed.

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- To reduce the number of times HCP must touch their face and potential risk for self-contamination, HCP should consider continuing to wear the same respirator or facemask (extended use) throughout their entire work shift, instead of intermittently switching back to their cloth face covering when not with patients. **Respirators with an exhalation valve are not recommended for source control, as they allow unfiltered exhaled breath to escape.**
- HCP should remove their respirator or facemask, perform hand hygiene, and put on their cloth face covering when leaving the facility at the end of their shift.

Clinicians should review guidance for [Persons Under Investigation \(Spanish\)](#) with all patients undergoing any type of COVID-19 testing. All symptomatic patients should still be advised to remain at home until their provider or public health officials inform them that their test was negative or a minimum of 10 days, whichever occurs first. Individuals who are a contact to someone who has tested positive must remain quarantined for 14 days regardless of test results. Those who test positive may come off isolation when all three of the following criteria are met: 1) At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); 2) At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared or at least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test for those without symptoms, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

Please notify your patients of test results for both positive and negative results. When a positive result is received, advise the patient to remain on home isolation. In order to assist with tracking and reporting cases at the state and local levels, we ask that you fax all completed Case Report Forms with a copy of the lab result and the patient's office visit to Granville Vance Public Health. Please send documentation to the patient's county of residence using the following fax numbers: **Granville – 919-693-8517; Vance – 252-492-4219.**

If you have questions, please call our offices at the 919-693-2141 (Granville) or 252-492-7915 (Vance).

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