



# Dorchester County Health Department

*“Working for Healthier People”*

3 Cedar Street  
Cambridge, MD 21613

Tel# (410) 228-3223  
FAX# (410) 228-9319

**Roger L. Harrell, M.H.A.**  
Health Officer

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contact: Angela Grove  
Direct Line: 410-901-8126  
Email: [angela.mercier@maryland.gov](mailto:angela.mercier@maryland.gov)

### **Dorchester County COVID-19 Testing Information**

Cambridge, MD (March 30, 2020) – Dorchester County Health Department is supporting local health care professionals in their COVID-19 testing efforts. Tests are being done by private providers, urgent care centers, and the hospital. Additionally, Dorchester County Health Department is helping to staff a Mid-Shore drive thru testing site at Chesapeake College in Wye Mills that is operating three days a week, by referral only.

All COVID-19 tests must be ordered by a physician. The tests are then sent to private laboratories for results. Dorchester County Health Department can only report confirmed positive cases because there is currently no way to track the total number of tests being ordered. However, the Health Department has access to an electronic database, called National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS), to confirm test results for Dorchester County residents and communicates daily with Maryland Department of Health.

Everyone does not need to be tested for COVID-19. Testing is only indicated in certain circumstances and based on availability of testing supplies. Maryland Department of Health has directed health care providers to follow the CDC testing criteria to determine which patients should be tested. These criteria may change over time, but the current testing priorities include the following groups:

- Hospitalized patients;
- Symptomatic Emergency Medical Service personnel, health care workers, and law enforcement personnel;
- Symptomatic patients in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, or in congregate living facilities housing individuals who are medically fragile; OR
- Symptomatic high-risk unstable patients whose care would be altered by a diagnosis of COVID-19.

There is a lack of test kits nationwide. Laboratories are working to increase the capacity to do testing. Dorchester County Health Department has placed orders to the state and LabCorp to procure more testing supplies for local providers.

If individuals have symptoms, including dry cough, fever (>100.4°F), and shortness of breath, they should call their health care provider for specific guidance. They may be instructed to remain at home and monitor their symptoms. People should not use the emergency room unless

they have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, to save those resources for those who are the most sick. The vast majority of people recover from this infection. Most people will have mild or moderate symptoms. Older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions like diabetes, immune suppression, or heart or lung disease have a greater risk for more serious illness.

If a person has symptoms and does not have a primary care provider, the individual can establish care with Fassett Magee, a federally qualified health center, or contact Your Doc's In for urgent care. Those without health insurance can call Dorchester County Health Department for assistance.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, spread like the flu through coughing and sneezing, close personal contact, or touching an object with the virus on it. The best protection against COVID-19 is to stay home as much as possible and practice social distancing, which means keeping at least six feet apart from others, and wash your hands and disinfect frequently touched surfaces often.

Visit [coronavirus.maryland.gov](https://coronavirus.maryland.gov) for updated information and resources about COVID-19 in Maryland. Dorchester County residents with general questions or concerns about COVID-19 can call the Dorchester County Health Department at 410-228-3223 Monday through Friday, 8am-4:30pm or 2-1-1 after hours, and follow Dorchester County Health Department's Emergency Preparedness Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/dorchesterhealthemergencypreparedness](https://www.facebook.com/dorchesterhealthemergencypreparedness).

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