

When NOT to Seek a Covid Test

By Sam Kennedy

LEHIGH VALLEY - St. Luke's University Health Network reminds the public that the Network requires a doctor's order for Covid-19 tests at its testing sites. Currently, the lines and wait-times at testing sites are hours long.

People who are symptomatic and have tested positive using an at-home test should NOT seek a second, confirmatory laboratory test from the Network. (An at-home test that produces a positive result in a symptomatic individual is considered highly accurate, so a second, laboratory test is not necessary to confirm the diagnosis.)

People who believe they have been exposed to Covid but are not symptomatic should NOT go to a St. Luke's hospital emergency department or a St. Luke's Care Now urgent care location for a Covid test to rule out infection. Additionally, people should NOT go to the hospital emergency department or a St. Luke's Care Now urgent care location for a Covid test for travel needs.

"Our region is experiencing a surge in demand for testing because of the Omicron variant," said Jeffrey Jahre, MD, St. Luke's Senior Vice President of Medical & Academic Affairs and Section Chief Emeritus of Infectious Diseases. "We ask for the public's thoughtful cooperation to ensure our region's health care resources are available and accessible in a timely manner to those patients with the greatest need."

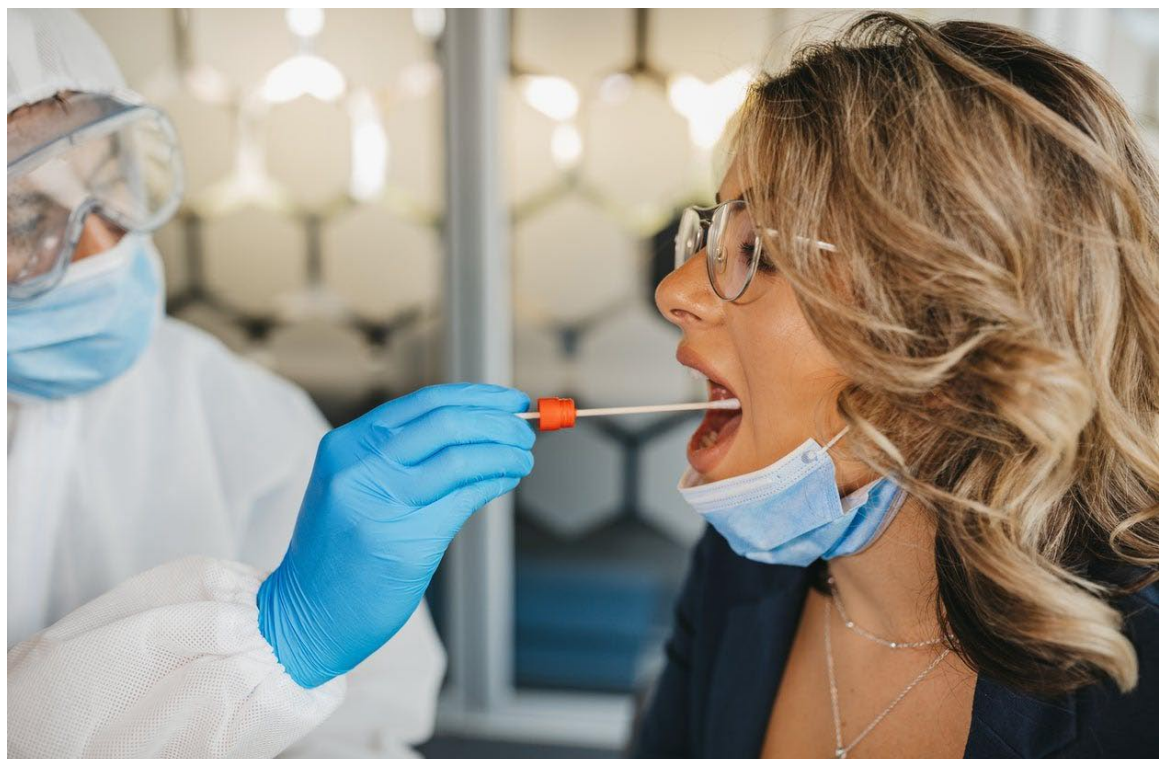
If you develop a fever and symptoms such as a cough or difficulty breathing, call your doctor for medical advice. For St. Luke's patients, please do one of the following:

- Call your St. Luke's Physician Group practice.
- Download the St. Luke's app to utilize the video visit feature to connect with a doctor.

For patients without a doctor, please call the St. Luke's Coronavirus hotline at 1-866-STLUKES (785-8537), option 7.

Fully vaccinated and boosted individuals with mild non-progressive Covid symptoms such as a runny nose do not need to go to a hospital emergency department or urgent care center. Individuals experiencing more serious Covid symptoms such as difficulty breathing, sustained high fever, confusion or the inability to maintain adequate hydration should seek ☐

Jahre noted that people who go to a hospital emergency department or urgent care location may experience longer wait times because of the ongoing surge in Covid-19 Omicron cases. "We ask people to be respectful to our staff, who are working diligently under very challenging circumstances," he said.



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