

COVID-19 FAQs in Chelan and Douglas Counties



Our Valley Our Future / Nuestro Valle Nuestro Futuro worked with the Chelan-Douglas Health District to provide answers to questions about

COVID-19 testing that have arisen among residents in the community. Here are the answers to those questions:

Q Why is testing important in slowing and managing the spread of COVID-19?

A Testing is important because it allows us to find out who has COVID-19. Many people with the infection show no symptoms, yet can infect others, and testing is the only way to identify them. People with the infection can then isolate themselves and prevent spreading it to others. It also allows us to find out who the person has been in contact with. This is really important with COVID-19, because it appears to be most contagious before symptoms develop. We then talk with the contacts who are believed to be at high risk of contracting COVID-19 and discuss possible quarantine/isolation.

Q Why is widespread testing not available now in Chelan and Douglas counties? Is it due to the lack of testing equipment? Lack of testing supplies?

A It was much harder to get tested in Chelan and Douglas counties, as well as many other counties and states, until very recently. This was due to both a lack of capacity at the labs and a lack of supplies needed to collect the samples for testing. While neither of these issues have completely disappeared, they are getting much better and we hope they will continue to improve. Testing at this point is widely available for symptomatic individuals.

Q Who can get tested now in Chelan and Douglas counties, and how that does happen, and where and when?

A Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should be able to be tested at this point, as long as their medical provider agrees that testing makes sense for them. Testing is arranged through the person's provider, and occurs at several testing sites in the area. The provider will give the details when they arrange for testing. As testing capacity increases, we believe broader testing will allow us to respond to the many non-symptomatic cases that can only be found with testing.

Q When is widespread testing likely to become available in Chelan and Douglas counties?

A See above. It is important to recognize that the shortages involve lab reagents and other supplies not produced locally. This means we are largely dependent on national efforts, though we also work to assure we get our share of whatever supplies do come into our state.

Q How much does a test cost an individual?

A Most health plans will cover COVID-19 testing. If the individual's insurance is state-regulated, then there will be no copay or deductible for COVID-19 testing. More information on testing and insurance can be found at www.insurance.wa.gov/health-insurance-and-coronavirus-covid-19-frequently-asked-questions. If a person does not have insurance, testing can be paid for by the state but will still need to be arranged by the individual's provider.

Q When that happens, what other steps will accompany that approach?

A When we get a positive test result from a lab, we contact the individual who was tested. We make sure they get any healthcare they may need, and collect more information about their experience with COVID-19, which helps us know more about this new disease and how it affects people. We also let them know that they should isolate themselves, and connect them to resources if they need help. Lastly, we ask about their contacts, so that we can assess their risk and contact those that may need to isolate/quarantine at home.

Q How long does it take to get test results back from the lab?

A It currently takes 1 to 2 days to get the test results back. This has really improved recently with the addition of more labs that can perform the testing, but timelines have often fluctuated before and that may happen again.

Source: Chelan-Douglas Health District

