

This is an official
DHEC/CDC Health Update

Distributed via Health Alert Network
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**Updated Guidance DHEC Guidance on Patient COVID-19 Testing
&
CDC Information and Guidance about Global Travel on Cruise
Ships, Including River Cruises, due to Coronavirus Disease 2019
(COVID-19)**

Summary

Updates on obtaining results of patient testing and information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on global travel on cruise ships is provided.

Information to assist in patient evaluation and appropriateness for testing for COVID-19 can be found in the DHEC HANs distributed on March 12, 2020 and March 13, 2020 available [here](#).

Providers are encouraged to register if not already receiving alerts directly at <https://apps.dhec.sc.gov/Health/SCHANRegistration/>

Important DHEC Update:

Healthcare providers submitting specimens for testing at the DHEC Public Health Laboratory (PHL) will need to ensure they are enrolled in Result Point to receive negative COVID-19 testing results. Regional epidemiology staff will continue to call providers about positive results although they can also be obtained in Result Point.

Test Results from DHEC Public Health Lab

Review the more detailed guidance on submitting specimens provided in the March 13, 2020 HAN available [here](#).

- If your facility/practice is not registered with the PHL, please send an email to openelis_admin@dhec.sc.gov to get a Customer ID and access to Result Point. These are both **required** prior to sending specimens.
- All laboratory reports generated are considered confidential information. The reports will be released only to authorized persons. Reports can be accessed via the internet

through a secure laboratory web portal (Result Point), this allows instant access to results. Results will be posted approximately 48 hours after the sample is received.

- Clients can only view information on orders that have been logged in with their Customer ID.

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is considered a Novel Infectious Agent and as such is **immediately** reportable under South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2020 List of Reportable Conditions available at: <https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/Library/CR-009025.pdf>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2020			
Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region			
MAIL OR FAX TO:			
<u>Lowcountry</u> Allendale, Bamberg, Beaufort, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg 4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600 N. Charleston, SC 29405 Fax: (843) 953-0051	<u>Midlands</u> Aiken, Barnwell, Chester, Edgefield, Fairfield, Kershaw, Lancaster, Lexington, Newberry, Richland, Saluda, York 2000 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29204 Fax: (803) 576-2993	<u>Pee Dee</u> Clarendon, Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, Sumter, Williamsburg 1931 Industrial Park Road Conway, SC 29526 Fax: (843) 915-6502 Fax2: (843) 915-6506	<u>Upstate</u> Abbeville, Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Oconee, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union 200 University Ridge Greenville, SC 29602 Fax: (864) 282-4373
CALL TO:			
Lowcountry Office: (843) 441-1091 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091	Midlands Office: (888) 801-1046 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046	Pee Dee Office: (843) 915-8886 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845	Upstate Office: (864) 372-3133 Nights/Weekends: (864) 423-6648
For information on reportable conditions, see https://www.scdhec.gov/ReportableConditions		<u>DHEC Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention & Control</u> Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology 2100 Bull St • Columbia, SC 29201 Phone: (803) 898-0861 • Fax: (803) 898-0897 Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902	

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- Health Alert** Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- Health Advisory** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- Health Update** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
- Info Service** Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

Information and Guidance about Global Travel on Cruise Ships, Including River Cruises, due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends all persons defer any travel on cruise ships, including river cruises, worldwide because of the increased risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission onboard ships.

Deferring travel is especially important for older adults and all people with serious chronic medical conditions (such as heart disease, diabetes or lung disease), because of their increased risk for severe disease. This health update provides information to clinicians about the current coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation and the risks associated with travel on cruise ships, including river cruises.

Background

Cruise ship passengers, including those who take river cruises, are at increased risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. In the past month, there have been reports of outbreaks of COVID-19 among passengers and crew on cruises. Recent examples include 696 cases and 8 deaths on the Diamond Princess cruise ship in Japan, 28 cases on the Grand Princess cruise ship in the United States, and at least 60 cases in 15 states associated with multiple Nile River voyages in Egypt as of March 14, 2020. Illness onset occurred both onboard ships and after passengers returned to the United States. The proximity of passengers and crew on small ships and boats traveling on rivers may result in an even higher number of COVID-19 infections.

Recommendations for Clinicians

Ask all patients about their planned or recent cruise ship travel, including river cruises.

1. Pre-travel advice
 - a) Advise patients to defer all cruise ship travel, including river cruises, worldwide.
 - b) Explain that their return travel to the United States may be impacted, and formal quarantine procedures may be implemented if confirmed cases are identified on board.
 - c) Explain that appropriate medical care or medical evacuation may not be available internationally.
 - d) Explain that some countries may refuse docking or disembarkation if there are known or suspected cases on board.
 - e) For patients who still intend to cruise, advise them to practice social distancing and monitor their health both during travel and for 14 days from the time they disembark. Social distancing means staying out of crowded places, avoiding group gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others, when possible.
2. Post-travel management

- a) Tell patients to follow CDC's guidance on steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>) if they develop acute febrile or respiratory illness after travel.
- b) Implement recommended infection prevention and control practices (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>) if you suspect a patient has COVID-19.
- c) Immediately notify DHEC (See provided contact information) if a patient meets clinical and epidemiologic criteria for a person under investigation (PUI) (available [here](#)) for COVID-19 and test as appropriate.

For More Information

State and local health departments can contact CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 770-488- 7100 for assistance with obtaining, storing, and shipping appropriate specimens to CDC for testing, including after hours, weekends, or holidays.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national, and international organizations.