

Medical Update Q&A's

Q9: Are people still allowed to get non-COVID related surgeries? How is the decision made?

If I need surgery I previously asked about non-COVID related surgeries. The Governor's May 15th state reopening allowed for certain surgeries to occur, pending COVID-19 testing of patient. The response from TONHC representative calling in for Dr. Villar was that comes from the state. I'm asking again for Nation members who may be in this situation who may require Non-COVID-19 surgeries may be required. Who is monitoring this issue?

Q10: If people hear or read about a pending social gathering and there are concerns with possible exposure and infection, is the first contact to TOPD, EOC, TONHC, or the District? Thank you.

The first contact should be to the District. The District should discourage any gatherings as specified in the executive order. If the gathering does take place then TOPD should be called.

The language in the current executive order "prohibits" gatherings, the new legislative action allows TOPD to cite for any violations of the executive order if they are unsuccessful in getting compliance by warning the group that they are in violation of a current executive order.

Q11: What can a community do when a person is not behaving according to the ordinances?

Examples we have seen are a vehicle driving around in our community & parked in the road driver got down & walked around. Music was loud but lowered down as he walked around his vehicle after curfew. Can TOPD stop any of them? Sometimes it's a nuisance and some people still need to work. Are they fined? How many have been stopped and issued tickets?

Please call TOPD and provide as much information as possible to address the concern.

Q12: Are COVID-19 self-test kits available and reliable?

Because COVID-19 is a public health emergency, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an Emergency Use Authorization for COVID-19 testing. The tests are new and not all have been well studied. Before laboratories use a new test on samples from patients, they must verify the test performance (make sure it works as expected) using "positive" and "negative" control materials. The positive control should always test positive, and the negative control should always test negative.

Two types of tests are generally available:

Genetic material (RNA) from the virus (nose swabs) use for current infection.

Serology (antibody blood test) to check for a person's immune system's response to past infection.

TONHC currently uses mostly specimens from nasal swabs that test for genetic material (RNA) from the COVID-19. The test TONHC uses at our clinics usually provides results within an hour as long as the lab staff does not get too many tests at one time. We also send specimens to specialized laboratories, but results can take up to a week to be available.

Some commercial labs offer home and self-test kits. This allows a person to use a nasal swab in their own nose and send the specimen by mail to a lab for testing. Results usually take 4-7 days.

"Pooled testing" is another strategy that can help in testing large numbers of people. Swabs are taken from groups of 5-10 people and tested in a single batch. If the group test is positive, then each individual is tested to see who was infected. This allows labs to be more efficient and test more people by using fewer resources.

Medical Update Q&A's

Q13: Will a drive-thru test be done in the northern part of the Nation?

TONHC has provided two Drive-Thru testing clinics and will use this tool for testing large numbers of people rapidly when there is a concern for cluster outbreaks. The second drive-thru tested 316 people in 7 hours. Over 50 staff were needed to hold the event including support from the Arizona National Guard. Testing large numbers of people after a concerning event can be very useful but required a large amount of resources and staff. To conduct more Drive-thru testing, the Nation will need outside support.

