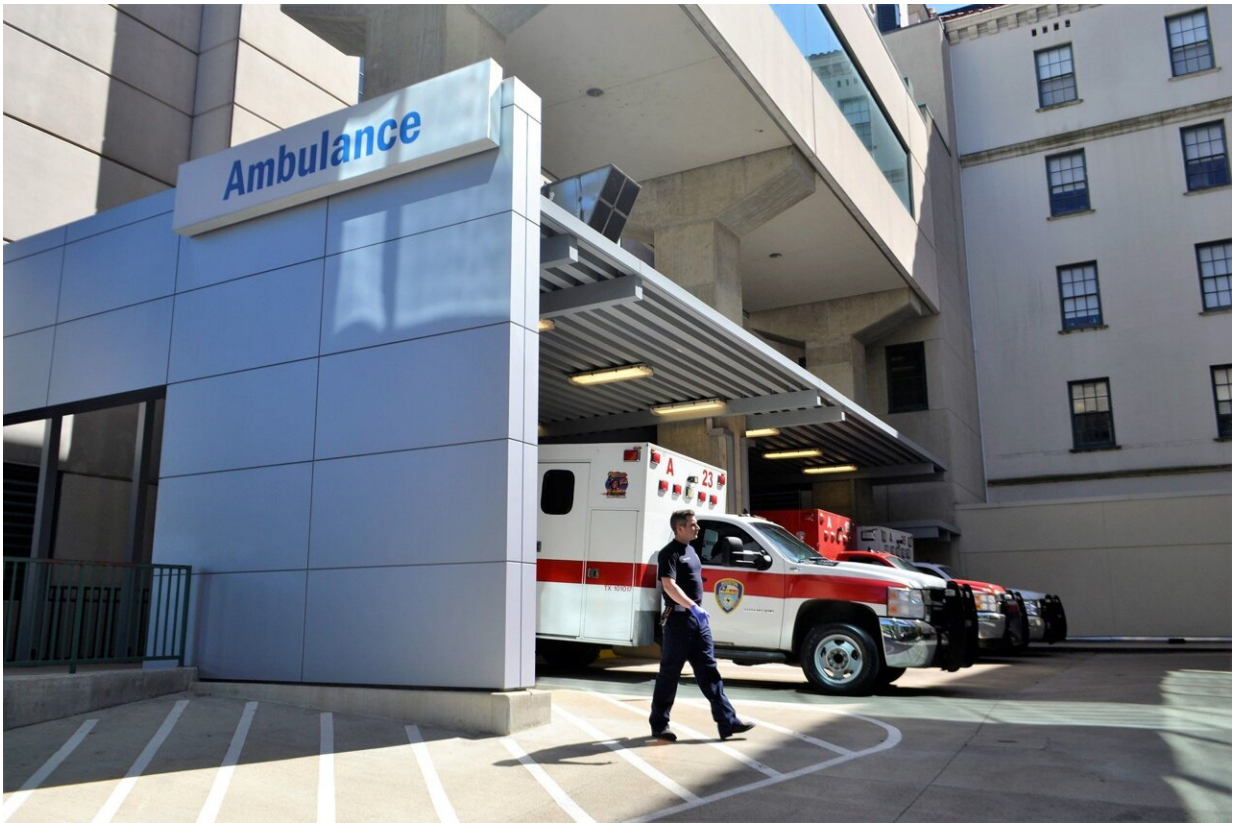


# Emergency departments are not for COVID-19 testing

January 18 2022, by Deb Balzer

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

If you need to test for COVID-19, Mayo Clinic health experts remind you not to go to the emergency department for testing. Emergency departments are for patients with life-threatening health care needs.

"Emergency departments are an important part of the overall health care system," says Dr. Laura Walker, an Mayo Clinic emergency medicine physician. "Our [primary care](#) and dedicated COVID-19 testing sites are also an important aspect. As an emergency physician, I need to be able to quickly see [patients](#) with emergency conditions—like strokes, heart attacks, injuries and severe illness—where time is of the essence. Conditions that can be cared for in the clinic setting or the outpatient testing centers for COVID-19 are best done there. We have put together incredible resources so patients can schedule their COVID-19 tests and quickly get them taken care of."

For those experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and need to be tested using a lab-based polymerase chain reaction test, or PCR, check your local state health department's website for COVID-19 testing options.

If patients are having trouble scheduling an appointment to be tested for COVID-19, they should not go to the [emergency department](#) to get tested. Instead, they should be patient and continue to check testing options to schedule the next available testing appointment near them.

Mayo Clinic recommends that everyone continue following the proper COVID-19 quarantine and isolation guidelines, as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention if they or someone around them is positive for COVID-19.

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Citation: Emergency departments are not for COVID-19 testing (2022, January 18) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-01-emergency-departments-covid-.html>

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