

## Science Care COVID-19 Precautions

May 4, 2020

Science Care continues to monitor the progression of the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, also named COVID-19. We are reviewing updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and American Association of Tissue Banks (AATB) daily. We have again reviewed our procedures and made a few additional updates.

COVID-19 PCR-based tests are now available for cadaver testing; therefore, we will be testing all newly accepted donors using PCR-based technology (SARS-CoV-2 BD MAX System) on samples collected by nasal or nasopharyngeal swab. In addition, we will continue to monitor testing options as they become available for retrospective testing on previously accepted donors and we will continue to follow the recommendations of regulatory agencies.

We will not at this time perform antibody-based serological tests as they do not detect the presence of the virus, but rather are beneficial in detecting potential immunity developed from previous exposure. A negative antibody test does not rule out the presence of virus, and a positive test is only an indication of exposure but cannot identify absence of residual virus.

We have also reviewed our procedures and made a few updates to our screening process.

The most applicable available guidance is from the CDC. In relation to the handling of postmortem human remains from Persons Under Investigation for COVID-19, they have advised:

Most often, spread from a living person happens with close contact (i.e., within about 6 feet) via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, like how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. This route of transmission is not a concern when handling human remains or performing postmortem procedures. Postmortem activities should be conducted with a focus on avoiding aerosol generating procedures and ensuring that if aerosol generation is likely (e.g., when using an oscillating saw) that appropriate engineering controls and personal protective equipment (PPE) are used.

The CDC's recommended PPE for handling these remains are:

- Wear nonsterile, nitrile gloves when handling potentially infectious materials.
- If there is a risk of cuts, puncture wounds, or other injuries that break the skin, wear heavy-duty gloves over the nitrile gloves.
- Wear a clean, long-sleeved fluid-resistant or impermeable gown to protect skin and clothing.
- Use a plastic face shield or a face mask and goggles to protect the face, eyes, nose, and mouth from splashes of potentially infectious bodily fluids.

There is currently no evidence of transmission of COVID-19 through the handling of bodies of deceased persons.

In addition, Science Care has updated our pre-screening questions to allow us to defer any donations from potentially infected donors. We err on the side of caution, deferring all donors with known risk or uncertain risk. Following guidance provided by the AATB we have made these updated changes:

1. Any of the following exotic diseases: cholera, plague, rabies, SARS, small pox, hemorrhagic fever, Ebola, yellow fever, malaria, chikungunya, dengue, Zika, typhus or COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)?
2. Has the donor had any unexplained fever, cough, shortness of breath or acute illness in the past 28 days without an alternative explanatory diagnosis?
3. Does the donor have a test pending results for COVID-19? → If YES, DECLINE
4. In the past 28 days has the donor increased their risk of exposure by traveling either domestically outside of their state or internationally where they may have been associated with a group of over 10 people at a time? → If YES, DECLINE
5. In the past 28 days has the donor had any close contact with any party that has been exposed to or diagnosed with COVID-19? → If YES, DECLINE

It is of utmost importance that we ensure the safety of our clients and employees. Feel free to reach out to us with any questions at [clientservices@sciencecare.com](mailto:clientservices@sciencecare.com).



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### References

AATB bulletins regarding COVID-19:

[Bulletin No. 20-10](#) released April 2, 2020

[Bulletin No.20-9](#) released March 16, 2020

[Bulletin No.20-8](#) released March 4, 2020

[Bulletin No.20-7](#) released February 25, 2020

[Bulletin No.20-3](#) released January 31, 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>