

TESTS FOR COVID-19

Two kinds of tests are available for COVID-19: [diagnostic tests](#) and [serologic \(antibody\) blood tests](#).

- A diagnostic test tells you if you have current or active infection.
- A serologic test (or antibody test) tells you if you had a past infection.

Diagnostic or Viral Test

A viral test tells if you have a current infection. Viral tests check samples from your respiratory system, such as a swab from the inside of your nose, to tell you if you currently have an infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Serologic or Antibody Test (Blood Test)

Antibody tests check if your blood has antibodies, which may tell if you have had a past infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. An antibody test may not show if you have a current COVID-19 infection because it can take 1–3 weeks after infection for your body to make antibodies.

Serologic (antibody) tests should not be used as the only way to diagnose someone as having COVID-19.

Choosing a Test

Chose a Diagnostic Test or Viral Test:

- If you have symptoms of Covid-19.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>D-19.

Choose a Serologic or Antibody Test

- If you think you may have been infected with COVID-19, but not sure.

Understanding Test Results

Diagnostic Test

- **Positive for COVID-19:** Learn how to stay safe if you are sick or caring for someone who is.
- **Negative:** You likely were not infected when your sample was collected, but you could still get sick.

Serologic (Antibody) Test

- **Positive**
 - You have antibodies that likely came from a prior infection with SARS-CoV-2 or a related coronavirus.
 - It's unclear if antibodies make you immune to the virus.
 - If you have symptoms and meet other guidelines for testing, you would need another type of test. This is called a nucleic acid test, or diagnostic test. This test uses respiratory samples, such as a swab from inside your nose, to confirm an active COVID-19 infection. A serologic (antibody) test alone cannot tell if you definitely have COVID-19.
 - If you do not have symptoms, you likely do not have an active infection. Depending on when you may have been infected you could still be infectious.
- **Negative:**

Negative serology (antibody) test results can have more than one meaning.

 - You likely did not have an infection in the past.
 - You could have an infection now.
 - You could still get sick if you have been exposed to the virus recently. This means you could still spread the virus.
 - Some people may take a long time to make antibodies, and some may not develop antibodies at all.
 - If you have symptom and meet other guidelines for testing, you need another type of test. This is called a nucleic acid test. It uses respiratory samples, such as a swab from inside your nose, to confirm an active COVID-19 infection. A serologic test alone cannot tell if you definitely have COVID-19 and can spread it to others. Know how to protect yourself and others.

The Purpose of Serology (Antibody) Testing in the U.S.

- To understand how widespread COVID-19 is and how this is changing over time.
- To guide control measures, such as social distancing.
- To learn about risk factors, such as age, location, or underlying health problems.
- To learn how many people had a mild or asymptomatic COVID-19.
- To understand how long antibodies be found after a COVID-19 infection

Serology (antibody) testing does not reveal:

- Who is immune to COVID-19
- How many antibodies are needed to protect someone
- If/how long someone with antibodies will be protected from COVID-19
- If people with antibodies can return to work

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html>

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-serological-test-validation-and-education-efforts>

By signing this form I agree that I:

- Have been given and have read the CDC facts on testing for COVID-19
- I understand there are no guarantees about testing
- There can be false negatives
- Understand that follow-up measures (such as self-isolation), symptom management, and possibility of being contagious will not be based on this test alone. These will be based on symptoms and possible exposures.

Signature of Patient or Responsible Party

Date and Time

Relationship to Patient (if Responsible Party is not Patient)