

Understanding Your COVID-19 Test

It's important to understand the different types of COVID-19 tests and what they mean. Here is what you need to know:

Types of tests

Diagnostic Tests

Diagnostic tests (also called viral tests) are used to diagnose COVID-19 infection. Some viral tests are molecular (also called PCR or NAAT tests) while others are antigen tests.

Lab based diagnostic tests

- Lab based diagnostic tests help determine if you have an active COVID-19 infection.
- Lab based diagnostic tests may use a nasal swab, an oral swab, and/or a saliva sample.
- Lab diagnostic tests are analyzed in a laboratory, using a sample or swab that was collected at the point of care. The point of care is wherever you received the test, which may be a pharmacy, a drive-thru test site, or a doctor's office.
- With a lab test, you typically receive results within 2-5 days.
- Lab-based tests are generally considered more accurate than rapid tests.

Rapid diagnostic tests

- Rapid diagnostic tests help determine if you have an active COVID-19 infection.
- Rapid tests use a nasal swab.
- Rapid tests are analyzed at the point of care. The point of care is wherever you received the test, which may be a pharmacy, a drive-thru test site, or a doctor's office.
- With a rapid test, you receive your results on the same day, often while you wait.

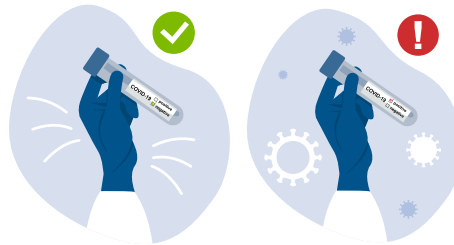
At-home diagnostic tests

- At-home diagnostic tests help determine if you have an active COVID-19 infection.
- At-home tests use either a nasal swab or saliva sample.
- There are several at-home testing options, some which require a prescription and some which do not (over the counter or OTC).

- Some at-home tests require you to collect a nasal or saliva sample in your home and send it to a lab to be analyzed. Others allow you to analyze the sample in your own home.
- To make sure your at-home test is approved by the FDA, check these guidelines: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/vitro-diagnostics-euas>

Antibody tests (also called serology or serologic tests)

- Antibody tests help determine if you were infected with COVID-19 in the past. They do not diagnose current COVID-19 infections.
- Antibody tests use a blood sample.
- A positive antibody test does not necessarily mean that you are immune. You may still carry the virus and pass it on to others. Continue to follow COVID-19 safety precautions, including mask wearing and social distancing.



Waiting for your results

- Your behavior while waiting on the results of a diagnostic test depends on your testing circumstances.
 - › If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, such as older adults and people with other medical conditions.
 - › If you had a known exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case, you should self-quarantine for 14 days from the time of the last known exposure.
 - › If you have a fever, cough, or other symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and away from others (except to get medical care).
- › Access the following link for more information: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/php/318271-A_FS_KeyStepsWhenWaitingForCOVID-19Results_3.pdf



After your results

In general, the following guidance should be observed. However, it is advisable to consult with your healthcare provider and/or public health authorities for your specific situation.

- If you have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, you should quarantine for 14 days from the last known exposure, regardless of your own test result.
- If you are symptomatic and test positive, you should self-isolate for:
 - › 10 days since symptoms first began AND
 - › You have been fever free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications AND
 - › Your symptoms have improved.
- If you are symptomatic and test negative, you should isolate for at least 24 hours after symptoms go away.
- If you are asymptomatic and test positive, you should continue to quarantine for 10 days after receiving your test, assuming no symptoms develop.
- If you are asymptomatic and test negative, you may return to normal activities immediately upon getting the test result. Remember to follow COVID-19 safety precautions, including mask wearing and social distancing.

For more information see

<https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID-test-result-iq-timetable.pdf>

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