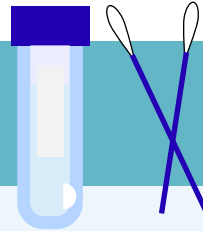


# COVID-19 Testing: What Are the Options?

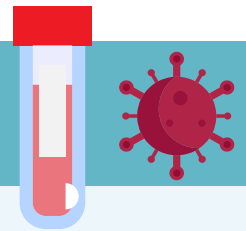
COVID-19 testing is essential to finding infections and measuring the spread of the virus. There are two types of COVID-19 tests: diagnostic tests and serology – or “antibody” – tests.



## Diagnostic Tests (PCR and Antigen)



## Serology (Antibody) Test



### What do the tests do and how do they work?

- Diagnostic tests identify current COVID-19 infections. There are two types: PCR tests and antigen tests.
- **PCR Test.** Finds genetic material from the virus that causes COVID-19.
- **Antigen Test.** Finds proteins from the virus.
- Both tests use a swab taken from the nose or throat.

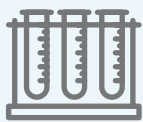
- Serology (antibody) tests can provide information about a person's past exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- This test identifies antibodies made by the body's immune system in response to infection with the virus.
- Uses a blood sample.



### What don't the tests do?

- Neither test shows past COVID-19 infection, but a person who recently recovered may still get a positive result for a few weeks.
- Neither tests for human genetic material.

- Not used to test for current infection.
- Does not test for human genetic material.



### How are the tests performed?

- **PCR Test.** Most commonly, tests are sent to a lab with results available in 2-5 days. Rapid PCR tests can return results in under one hour, but may be less reliable than results from a lab.
- **Antigen Test.** Antigen tests can be performed in any medical setting, with results available in minutes.

- Serology tests can be processed in a hospital/clinic or sent to an outside lab.
- Results can take a few hours if done in a hospital/clinic or a few days if sent to an outside lab.



### How accurate are the test results and what do they mean?

- **Positive Result.** The person likely had COVID-19 infection at the time of the test.
- **Negative Result.** The person likely did not have COVID-19 infection at the time of the test.
- For a small number of people, the test may incorrectly say the person is negative for COVID-19 when they are in fact positive. To prevent spread of COVID-19, anyone with symptoms should isolate at home even if they receive a negative test result.

- **Positive Result.** The person likely had a COVID-19 infection in the past. It is unknown how long or even if this means the person will be protected from COVID-19 in the future.
- **Negative Result.** The person likely did not have a COVID-19 infection in the past. It is possible some people may get a false negative result even if they were infected since it is unknown how long these antibodies stay in the body.