

## The Basics of A The Basics of Testing for the Virus (SARS-CoV-2) that Causes COVID-19

Test	Key Information
Antigen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also called “rapid tests” and “home tests”</li> <li>• Detects proteins from the virus</li> <li>• Performed in some health clinics, doctor offices, work places, schools, distributed to the public by the Department of Health and other agencies, and available for purchase by the general public without a prescription in stores and online</li> <li>• Pros               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relatively inexpensive</li> <li>○ Results typically available in 15-30 minutes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cons               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Moderately sensitive and may not detect virus early in the course of infection or late in the infection once the virus has substantially decreased</li> <li>○ Rely on the individual to perform the test correctly</li> <li>○ Not currently covered by certain insurances</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
PCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A type of nucleic amplification test (NAAT) test (molecular test)</li> <li>• Detects RNA (genetic code) from the virus</li> <li>• Performed in some health clinics, some doctor offices, state-run testing clinics, and hospitals</li> <li>• Pros               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 100% of cost is covered by insurance or federal mandate</li> <li>○ Highly sensitive</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Cons               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Typically must be performed in a laboratory setting</li> <li>○ Results typically occur within 24 hours, however, transport times and limited capacity can lead to wait times of several days</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Test	Indication	Result	Steps
Antigen	Asymptomatic screening	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accept that the test may be negative when virus levels are low early in the course of infection</li> <li>Continue with normal activities</li> <li>Follow appropriate mitigation measures for current level of community transmission of the virus causing COVID-19</li> </ul>
		Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat as positive</li> <li>Isolate according to guidelines</li> <li>May confirm with molecular test</li> </ul>
	Exposure	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test should be performed at day 4 to 5</li> <li>Accept that the test may be negative when virus levels are low early in the course of infection</li> <li>Consider repeating in 24 hours</li> </ul>
		Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat as positive</li> <li>May confirm with molecular test</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to isolate</li> <li>Pursue a PCR test to exclude a “false negative” antigen test</li> </ul>
		Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat as positive</li> <li>DO NOT pursue additional testing</li> </ul>
PCR	Asymptomatic screening	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with normal activities</li> <li>Follow appropriate mitigation measures for current level of community transmission of the virus causing COVID-19</li> </ul>
		Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isolate according to guidelines</li> </ul>
	Exposure	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Test should be performed at day 4 to 5</li> <li>Continue with normal activities</li> <li>Follow appropriate mitigation measures for current level of community transmission of the virus causing COVID-19</li> </ul>
		Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isolate according to guidelines</li> </ul>
	Symptomatic	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay away from work and school while sick</li> <li>Follow appropriate mitigation measures for current level of community transmission of the virus causing COVID-19</li> </ul>
		Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isolate according to guidelines</li> </ul>