

Do I Still Need to Test for COVID-19?

WHY TEST?

While vaccines provide critical protection against severe infection and hospitalization, COVID-19 remains a threat to public health. Testing and reporting remain critical to preventing disease spread as new variants emerge.

When should I test?

If you develop symptoms (cough, sore throat, fever, digestive issues, fatigue), test immediately. If you are vaccinated and have been exposed to COVID-19 but do not exhibit symptoms, you do not need to quarantine, but should wear a mask, keep social distance, and get tested at least 5 days after exposure. If you are **not up-to-date** on your COVID-19 vaccinations and have been exposed, stay home and [quarantine](#) for at least 5 full days, get tested 5 days after exposure, and watch for symptoms for 10 days.ⁱ Use the [CDC's Coronavirus Self-Checker](#) to help determine when to test and seek medical care.ⁱⁱ

Which test should I use?

Antigen and PCR tests determine current or recent COVID-19 infection. Antigen (or rapid) tests are quick, easy to find and can be performed at home. They are less accurate in early days of infection or when you do not have symptoms but are a good option if you have been exposed and have symptoms.

PCR tests require a lab and results typically take 1-3 days. They are considered the gold standard for their accuracy and are recommended for those who do not have symptoms following exposure or to confirm results of antigen tests.

Where can I get a test?

Free at-home tests can be found at your local pharmacy and ordered online [here](#).ⁱⁱⁱ To find a testing location for either PCR or antigen tests, this [HHS tool](#) locates free or low-cost options.^{iv}

I've tested for COVID-19 - what now?

If you test positive for COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider even if you have minor or no symptoms as this information helps public health departments track disease spread. Following a positive test, [isolate and monitor your symptoms](#).^v During this time, stay home and away from others.

If you have been exposed to COVID-19, you should wear a mask to protect yourself and others. If you test positive, continue to mask for 10 days.

If you've tested negative using an antigen test within the initial days of exposure or when your symptoms started, it is recommended you retest after 5 days or take a PCR test to confirm results. During this time, you should quarantine, even if you do not have any symptoms.



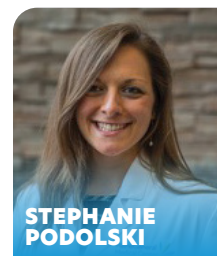
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ⁱ COVID-19: Quarantine and Isolation, CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#quarantine%C2%A0>

ⁱⁱ Coronavirus Self-Checker, CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/coronavirus-self-checker.html#content>

ⁱⁱⁱ [COVID.gov](#)

^{iv} Community-Based Testing Sites for COVID-19, HHS. <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/community-based-testing-sites/index.html>

^v Isolation, CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#iso>



Going Viral

The Testing, Diagnosis
& Treatment of COVID-19

