

## COVID-19 Antibody Test Information

### ***What is a COVID 19 antibody test?***

To help fight infections, your immune system makes antibodies. These are proteins that recognize specific viruses. It takes about 1-3 weeks for antibodies to be made. Antibody tests indicate past infections, not current infections. It is not yet known whether antibodies fully protect against COVID-19 re-infection. Not all who've been infected make COVID-19 antibodies.

### ***What does a positive test for COVID-19 antibodies mean?***

A positive test means that your body already fought off a COVID-19 infection (or an infection with a closely related virus). If this surprises you, remember not everyone with COVID-19 has symptoms. It is not yet known whether COVID-19 antibodies confer immunity. You may still be at risk for re-infection even though you have COVID-19 antibodies. A positive antibody test does not stop you from spreading the virus to others, even if you feel well. Continue to use a face mask in public, maintain social distancing, and wash or sanitize your hands regularly.

### ***What does a negative test for COVID-19 antibodies mean?***

You may not have had COVID-19 illness. Many viral infections cause similar symptoms. Although you may have been ill, a different virus may have been the cause. The antibody test won't detect very early infections. To detect a current infection, a different test is needed. This is called a viral test. Viral tests use material from your nose and throat to detect virus. It may take up to 14 days to develop symptoms after infection. This means you may feel perfectly well even though you are actually infected. Finally, some people take longer to make antibodies after infection and others don't make antibodies at all.

### ***Summary***

Antibody tests search for past infections, not current infections. Not all who've had COVID-19 will produce antibodies. For those who do, it is not yet known whether COVID-19 antibodies protect against re-infection. Regardless of the result, we can still spread virus to others. We must continue to mask in public, maintain social distancing, and wash or sanitize our hands regularly.

Learn more about antibody testing at CDC.gov by clicking this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html>