

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Rapid COVID-19 Antigen Testing

How is a rapid test different than a traditional PCR test?

While most PCR test results typically take a few days between when the sample is collected and the individual is notified, rapid tests are a convenient, highly portable and affordable tool for detecting active coronavirus infections. Individuals can test and get a test result in as little as 15 minutes, allowing people who test positive to isolate more quickly.

How accurate are rapid tests?

Rapid tests are not as sensitive and do have a higher false-negative rate meaning you may test negative, but still have the virus. Even if you test negative, you should continue to practice COVID-19 prevention measures, including wearing a mask and physical distancing. Getting a false-positive (where you test positive, but don't have the virus) is unlikely. PCR tests that are done in the lab continue to be the gold standard test for COVID-19 and they are extremely accurate.

When is an antigen test most accurate?

Rapid antigen tests perform best when the person is symptomatic and tested in the early stages of infection with SARS-CoV-2 when viral load is generally highest. They also may be informative in diagnostic testing situations in which the person has a known exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

What is the testing process?

Tests are administered with a nasal swab in the lower portion of the nose. Participants will swab their own nose under supervision at the testing site. A fact sheet for people who test is available [on the website](#).

- **What if I test positive?**

Isolate at home immediately. Visit health.nd.gov/covidpositive for more information and a case investigator will be in touch within 24 hours.

- **What if I have a negative test, but still have symptoms?**

Individuals who test negative, but still have symptoms should get a PCR test. Visit health.nd.gov/testnd for a location near you.

- **What if I test negative?**

Individuals should continue to monitor for symptoms. COVID-19 testing isn't a substitute for basic measures to prevent spread of COVID-19, including physical distancing, wearing a mask, washing hands, sanitizing frequently touched surfaces and avoiding crowded indoor spaces.

Should I get tested if I've previously tested positive for COVID-19?

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 90 days should not get re-tested.

How long do I have to wait for results, and how do I get them?

Results will typically be available onsite within 15 minutes.

Can a COVID-19 vaccine cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests?

No. COVID-19 viral tests will not show a positive result after receipt of the COVID-19 vaccine.