



# COVID-19

## UPDATE

Getting vaccinated prevents severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Unvaccinated people should get vaccinated and continue masking until they are fully vaccinated. With the Delta variant, this is more urgent than ever. CDC has updated [guidance for fully vaccinated people](#) based on new evidence on the Delta variant.

## COVID-19 Testing Overview

Updated Aug. 2, 2021

[Print](#)

[Find out who should get tested](#). Protect yourself and others. Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces, and wash your hands often.

## Types of tests

COVID-19 tests are available that can test for [current infection](#) or [past infection](#).

- A [viral test](#) tells you if you have a current infection. Two types of viral tests can be used: nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) and antigen tests.
- An [antibody test](#) (also known as a serology test) might tell you if you had a past infection. Antibody tests should not be used to diagnose a current infection.



Coronavirus Self-Checker

[Click Here to Begin](#)

## Who should get tested for current infection

- People who have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
- Most people who have had [close contact](#) (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone with confirmed COVID-19.
  - Fully vaccinated people should be tested 3-5 days following a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.
  - People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not need to get tested following an exposure as long as they do not develop new symptoms.
- Unvaccinated people who have taken part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 because they cannot physically distance as needed to avoid [exposure](#), such as travel, attending large social or mass gatherings, or being in crowded or poorly-ventilated indoor settings.
- People who have been asked or referred to get [tested](#) by their healthcare provider, or [state](#), [tribal](#), [local](#) [↗](#), or [territorial health department](#)

CDC recommends that anyone with any signs or [symptoms of COVID-19](#) get tested, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection. If you get tested because you have symptoms or were potentially exposed to the virus, you should stay away from others pending test results and follow the advice of your health care provider or a public health professional.

## When you are fully vaccinated and traveling internationally

International travelers need to pay close attention to the situation at their international destinations before traveling due to the spread of new variants and because the burden of COVID-19 varies globally.

- Fully vaccinated travelers do not need to get tested before leaving the United States unless required by their destination.
- Fully vaccinated air travelers coming to the United States from abroad, including U.S. citizens, are still [required](#) to have a negative SARS-CoV-2 viral test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before they board a flight to the United States.
- International travelers arriving in the United States are still recommended to get a SARS-CoV-2 viral test 3-5 days after travel regardless of vaccination status.
- Fully vaccinated travelers do not need to self-quarantine in the United States following international travel.
- For more information, see [International Travel During COVID-19](#).

## How to get tested for current COVID-19 infection

- Contact your healthcare provider or visit your [state, tribal, local](#) [link](#), and territorial [health department's website](#) to find the latest local information on testing. The type of viral COVID-19 tests offered may differ by location.

You and your healthcare provider might also consider either an [at-home collection kit](#) or an [at-home test](#) if you have signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and if you can't get tested by a healthcare provider or public health official.

## How to use results of viral tests

- If you test positive, know what protective steps to take to [prevent others from getting sick](#).
- If you test negative, you probably were not infected at the time your sample was collected. The test result only means that you did not have COVID-19 at the time of testing. Continue to take steps to [protect yourself](#).



Find out what steps you can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19

### Print Resources

### HOW TO COLLECT YOUR ANTERIOR NASAL SWAB SAMPLE FOR COVID-19 TESTING

Follow the instructions included with your sample kit. Use **only** materials provided in your kit to collect and store your sample, unless the kit says to do otherwise. Use **only** an approved sampling kit given to you by your healthcare provider or by personnel at the testing center.

#### Initial set-up

- Open the sampling kit.
- Apply hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

#### Sample collection

- Remove the swab from the container, being careful not to touch the soft end with your hand.
- Insert the swab into your nostril. Do not insert it more than half an inch into your nostril.
- Slowly twist the swab, rubbing it along the insides of your nostril for 15 seconds.

### How to Collect An Anterior Nasal Swab Specimen for COVID-19 Testing

### HOW TO COLLECT A NASAL MID-TURBINATE SPECIMEN FOR COVID-19 TESTING

Use **only** an authorized specimen collection kit. Get a kit from your healthcare provider or a testing center. Kits are available at a pharmacy or other retail outlet. Follow the instructions included with the specimen collection kit. Use **only** materials provided in the kit to collect and store or mail the specimen unless the kit says to do otherwise. Use these instructions with kits that specify a nasal mid-turbinate swab collection.

#### Setup

- Disinfect the surface where you will open the collection kit. Remove and lay out contents of kit. Read instructions before starting specimen collection.
- Wash hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

#### Specimen Collection

- Remove the swab from the package. Do not touch the soft end with your hands or anything else.
- Insert the entire soft end of the swab straight back into your nostril less than one inch (about 2cm) or until resistance is felt.
- Slowly rotate the swab, gently rubbing it along the insides of your nasal passage several times.
- Gently remove the swab.
- Using the same swab, repeat steps 4-6 in your other nostril with the same end of the swab.

### How to Collect a Nasal Mid-Turbinate Swab Sample for COVID-19 Testing

## CÓMO RECOLECTAR UNA MUESTRA DE LA REGIÓN NASAL ANTERIOR PARA LA PRUEBA DE COVID-19

Use **solamente** un kit de recolección de muestras autorizado, provisto por su proveedor de atención médica o el personal del lugar donde realicen las pruebas, o comprado sin receta en una farmacia u otra tienda. Siga las instrucciones incluidas en el kit de recolección de muestras que podría usarse en el sitio donde se hacen pruebas o en casa. Use **solamente** los materiales provistos en el kit de recolección y guarde o envíe por correo la muestra, a menos que las instrucciones digan otra cosa. Estas instrucciones también se pueden usar con los kits de pruebas caseras si especifican la recolección de la región nasal posterior con un bastoncito de algodón.

### Preparación

- Desinfecte la superficie sobre la que abrirá el kit de recolección. Retire el contenido del kit y póngalo sobre esa superficie. Lea las instrucciones antes de comenzar a recolectar la muestra.
- Lávese las manos con agua y jabón. Si no hay agua y jabón disponibles, use un desinfectante de manos.

### Recolección de la muestra

- Retire el bastoncito de algodón del paquete. No toque el extremo blanco con sus manos ni con otra cosa.
- Inserte el extremo blando del bastoncito en una de sus fosas nasales, **no más de 1/4 de pulgada** (1.5 cm) dentro de la nariz.
- Haga girar el bastoncito lentamente, presionando con suavidad contra la fosa nasal al menos 4 veces por un total de 15 segundos. Obtenga cuanto más pueda de las secreciones nasales en el extremo del bastoncito de algodón.
- Retire el bastoncito suavemente.
- Con el mismo bastoncito, repita los pasos 4 a 6 en la otra fosa nasal, usando el mismo extremo del bastoncito de algodón.

cdc.gov/coronavirus-es

## CÓMO RECOGER UNA MUESTRA DEL CORNETE NASAL MEDIO PARA UNA PRUEBA DE COVID-19

Use **solamente** un kit de recolección de muestras autorizado. Obtenga un kit de su proveedor de atención médica o del centro donde realicen las pruebas de detección. Los kits están disponibles en farmacias u otros almacenes. Siga las instrucciones incluidas en el kit de recolección de muestras. Use **solamente** los materiales provistos en el kit de recolección y guarde o envíe por correo la muestra a menos que las instrucciones digan otra cosa. Use estas instrucciones con los kits que especifiquen la recolección de muestra del cornete nasal medio con un bastoncito de algodón (hisopo).

### Preparación

- Desinfecte la superficie sobre la que abrirá el kit de recolección. Retire el contenido del kit y póngalo sobre esa superficie. Lea las instrucciones antes de comenzar a recolectar la muestra.
- Lávese las manos con agua y jabón. Si no hay agua y jabón disponibles, use un desinfectante de manos.

### Recolección de muestra

- Retire el bastoncito de algodón del paquete. No toque el extremo blanco con sus manos ni con otra cosa.
- Inserte el extremo blando (algodón) del bastoncito hacia la parte de atrás de una de sus fosas nasales, **menos de una pulgada** (alrededor de 2 cm) o hasta que sienta resistencia (sienta que algo no lo deja seguir).
- Gire el bastoncito lentamente, frotándolo con suavidad por el interior de su fosa nasal varias veces.
- Retire el bastoncito suavemente.
- Con el mismo bastoncito, repita los pasos 4 a 6 en la otra fosa nasal, usando el mismo extremo del bastoncito de algodón.

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# CÓMO RECOLECTAR UNA MUESTRA DE LA REGIÓN NASAL ANTERIOR PARA LA PRUEBA DE COVID-19

# CÓMO RECOGER UNA MUESTRA DEL CORNETE NASAL MEDIO PARA UNA PRUEBA DE COVID-19

## What Your Test Results Mean

Accessible version available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/diagnostic-testing.html>

### If you test positive for COVID-19

TAKE STEPS TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

**STAY HOME.**  
Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.

**STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR DOCTOR.**

**GET REST AND STAY HYDRATED.**  
Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.

**SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM OTHER PEOPLE.**  
As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people and pets in your home.

## What Your Test Results Mean

English [216kb, 1 page]  
Español [208kb, 1 page]

## Video Resources