



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



Test for Current Infection

Updated Aug. 24, 2020

[Print](#)

Protect yourself and others. Wear a mask, wash hands often, stay 6 ft from others.

Considerations for who should get tested

- People who have symptoms of COVID-19
- People who have had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with someone with confirmed COVID-19
- People who have been asked or referred to get testing by their healthcare provider, [local](#) [🔗](#) or [state](#) health department.

Not everyone needs to be tested. If you do get tested, you should self-quarantine/isolate at home pending test results and follow the advice of your health care provider or a public health professional.



Coronavirus Self-Checker

A guide to help you make decisions on when to seek testing and appropriate medical care.

Take steps to protect yourself

Whether you test positive or negative for COVID-19, you should take preventive measures to [protect yourself and others](#).

How to get a viral test

A viral test checks samples to find out if you are currently infected with COVID-19. The time it takes to process these tests can vary.

- You can visit your [state](#) or [local](#) health department's website to look for the latest local information on testing.
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and want to get tested, call your healthcare provider first.
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and are not tested, it is important to stay home. Find out [what to do if you are sick](#).


What to do after a viral test

To get your test result, please check with the group that performed your test, such as your healthcare provider or [health department](#). How long it will take to get your test results depends on the test used.

- **If you test positive for COVID-19**, know what protective steps to take [if you are sick](#).
 - Most people have mild COVID-19 illness and can recover at home without medical care. Contact your healthcare provider if your symptoms are getting worse or if you have questions about your health.
- **If you test negative for COVID-19**, you probably were not infected at the time your sample was collected. This does not mean you will not get sick:
 - A negative test result only means that you did not have COVID-19 at the time of testing or that your sample was collected too early in your infection.
 - You could also be exposed to COVID-19 after the test and then get infected and spread the virus to others.
 - If you have symptoms later, you may need another test to determine if you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.



Print Resources


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

Initial set up


1. Open the packaging kit.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

Sample collection

3. Remove the swab from the packaging. Do not touch the tip of the swab.
4. Insert the swab into your nostril. Breathe in and out through your nose.
5. Gently rotate the swab, touching the inside of your nostril.

 [PDF - 401 KB]

How to Collect Your Anterior Nasal Swab Sample for COVID-19 Testing


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

Initial set up

1. Open the packaging kit.
2. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

Sample collection

3. Remove the swab from the packaging. Do not touch the tip of the swab.
4. Insert the swab into your nostril. Breathe in and out through your nose.
5. Gently rotate the swab, touching the inside of your nostril.

 [PDF - 420 KB]


Testing Deep Nasal Self Swab

What Your Test Results Mean

If you test positive for COVID-19

TAKE STEPS TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

- STOP TRAVEL**
Do not leave your home, except to get medical care. Do not visit public areas.
- STOP GOING TO WORK OR SCHOOL**
- GET MEDICAL CARE FOR YOUR SYMPTOMS**
Take over-the-counter medications, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.
- ISOLATE YOURSELF FROM OTHER PEOPLE**
As much as possible, stay in a separate room and away from other people and pets in your home.

 [PDF - PDF-215KB]

What Your Test Results Mean

Video Resources

Last Updated Aug. 24, 2020

Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)