

Testing for COVID-19

What happens when you get infected with SARS-CoV-2?




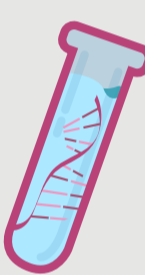
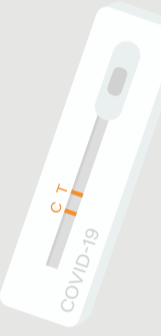
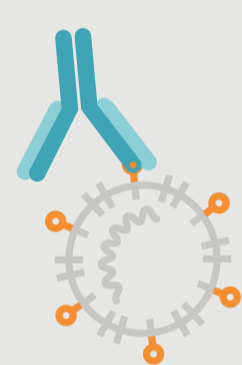








The virus enters the body and infection may result in COVID-19. The person may or may not have symptoms.

The specialised cells of the immune system help fight infection by producing **antibodies** that precisely match the invading **viral antigen**, which is a unique feature of the virus.

After the infection is cleared, protective antibodies can remain in the body to fight future infections with SARS-CoV-2.

How does testing work?

	PCR testing	Rapid lateral flow testing	Antibody testing
The test uses...	 Swabs from the nose and throat	 Swabs from the nose and/or throat mixed with a solution	 Blood sample
The samples are tested...	 ...in a lab to identify the presence of SARS-CoV-2 genetic material .	 ...at home using a hand-held device to identify the presence of specific SARS-CoV-2 antigen .	 ...in a lab to identify any antibodies present that match and bind to the viral antigen .
The test tells us...	 ...who currently has an infection.	 ...who currently has an infection.	 ...who has previously been infected with SARS-CoV-2 or made antibodies after having the COVID-19 vaccine .
The test does NOT tell us...	 ...about someone's immune response.	 ...about someone's immune response.	 ...whether someone is necessarily protected from future infection.
When should the test be taken?	When symptoms are present; as required for travel.	Regularly when you don't have symptoms; if you've been in close contact with someone with COVID-19; to end self-isolation; as required for travel.	After an infection has been cleared. If available and offered, after a positive PCR test; as part of a screening programme or research study.
The test result will likely be positive..	...during an active infection when the virus is in the body even if the person has no symptoms.	...during an active infection when the virus is in the body even if the person has no symptoms.	...from 7-10 days after an infection or vaccination, and for several months after.
	