PCR testing for COVID-19

How does the test work?
Swabs from the nose and throat...
...are used in a lab test to identify the presence of SARS-CoV-2 genetic material.

What does the test tell us?
The test tells us who currently has an infection, but nothing about someone’s immune response.

When is the test used?
During an active infection when the virus is in the body even if the person has no symptoms.

The test won’t work after the infection is gone

How accurate is it?
PCR is an established technique providing a very sensitive test with high accuracy. False negative results are possible if the swab doesn’t pick up enough virus.