Antibody testing for COVID-19

**What is an antibody?**
A protein made by our immune system to precisely match the shape of an invading virus antigen, which is a unique feature of the virus. Protective antibodies help fight an infection.

**How does the test work?**
A patient’s blood sample is used to test if there are any antibodies present that match and bind to the viral antigen.

**What does the test tell us?**
The test determines previous exposure to the virus. The presence of antibodies does not necessarily mean a person is protected from future infection.

**When is the test used?**
From a week to several months after infection.

**How accurate is it?**
Optimising, evaluating and validating these tests is important. There are two approved lab tests being used in the UK but neither are 100% accurate.