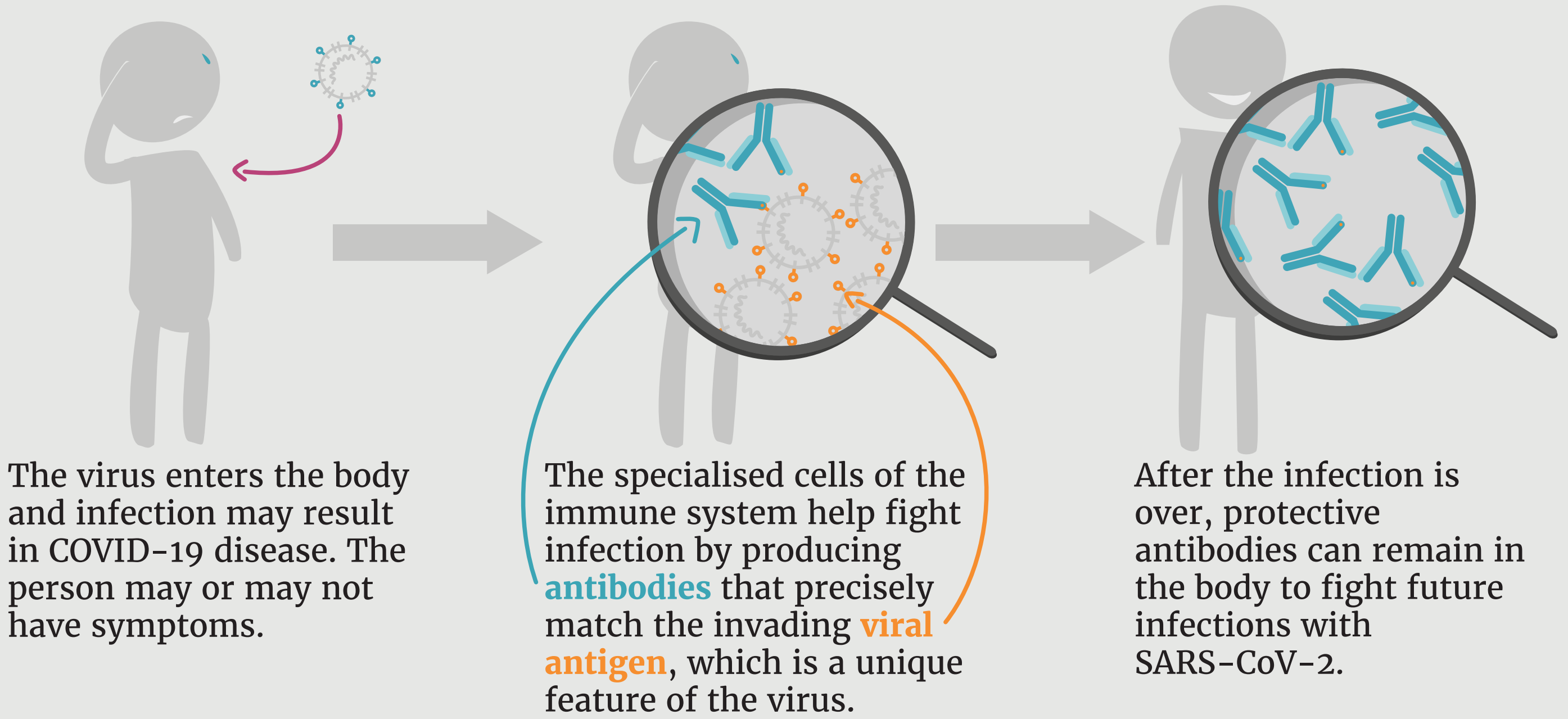


Testing for COVID-19

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



How does testing work?

PCR testing


Antibody testing

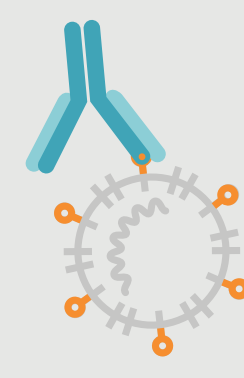
The test uses...

 Swabs from the nose and throat

 Blood sample

The samples are used...

 ...in a lab test to identify the presence of SARS-CoV-2 **genetic material**

 ...to test if there are any **antibodies** present that match and bind to the viral **antigen**


The test tells us...

 ...who **currently** has an infection

 ...who has **previously** had an infection

The test does NOT tell us...

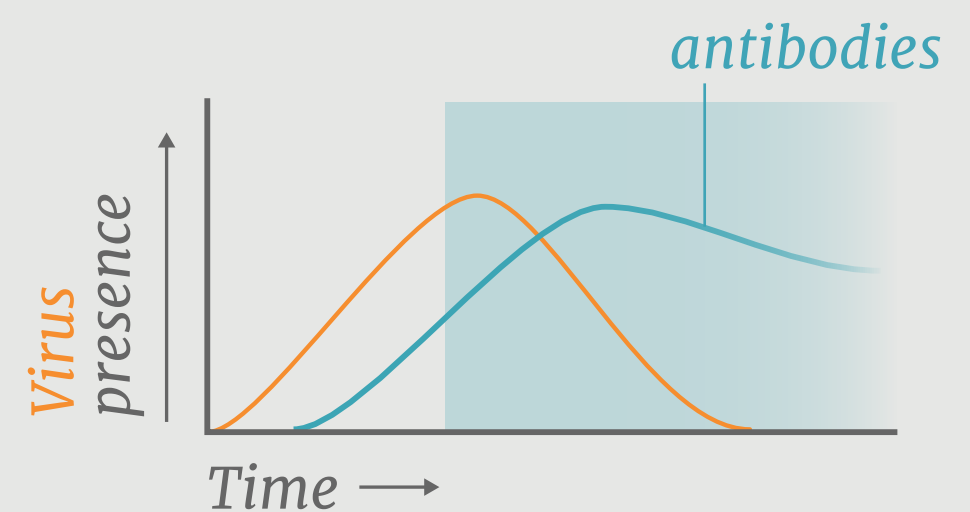
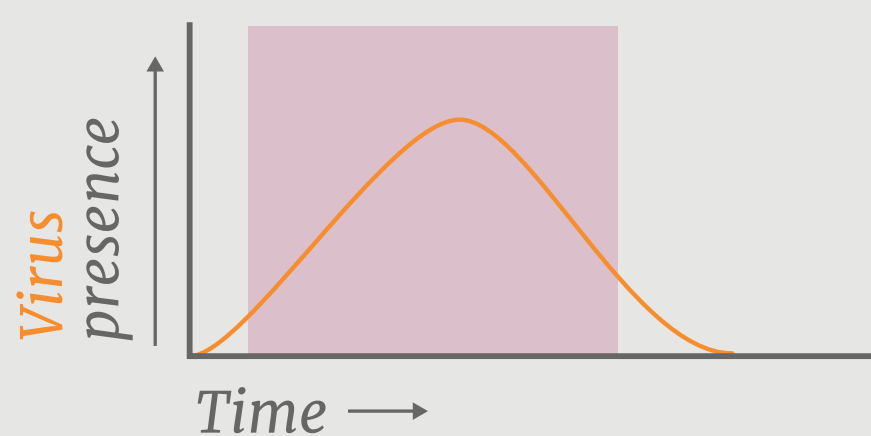
 ...about someone's immune response

 ...whether someone is necessarily protected from future infection

When is the test used?

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

From a week to several months after infection.



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.

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