

Talking Points for Providers Related to the COVID Antibody Testing

Purpose: Assist providers in speaking with patients about the COVID-19 Antibody test

What is the COVID-19 Antibody test?

The test is designed to detect antibodies (also known as immunoglobulins) against the virus that causes COVID-19. This is not the same as the COVID-19 diagnostic test. Antibodies are proteins produced by the immune system in response to an infection and are specific to that particular infection. This test detects IgG antibodies that start to develop in most patients within seven to 10 days after symptoms of COVID-19 begin. IgG antibodies remain in the blood after an infection has passed. These antibodies indicate that you may have had COVID-19 in the recent past. It is unknown at this point how much protection antibodies might provide against another infection of COVID-19.

What do my COVID-19 antibody test results mean?

The COVID-19 antibody test will tell us if you have an antibody to COVID-19 or you do not have the antibody. It is thought to take about 6 weeks for your body to learn how to make this new antibody. Any test that we do has some error and Piedmont is committed to having the most accurate test possible. This test does **NOT** indicate you are immune to COVID-19.

- If the test comes back positive, it means you may have been exposed to COVID-19 and your body is responding in the appropriate manner by forming antibodies to help combat the coronavirus. At this time, science does not have the ability to say for certain that people with this antibody are now immune to COVID-19. We can only say that you may have been exposed. It also does not tell us if you have the infection currently or if you are still infectious.
- If the test comes back negative, it means that you have a lower likelihood that you have been exposed to COVID-19 or that it is too early to detect the body's immune reaction (less than 6 weeks). A negative result does **NOT indicate that you are immune** to COVID-19.
- There is also a chance that a positive result is incorrect (false positive). Piedmont is committed to having the most accurate test possible.

When will I receive my COVID-19 antibody test results?

Test results should be available within 2-3 business days.

How will I receive my COVID-19 antibody test results?

The results will be delivered in the same manner that you typically get your results (e.g. MyChart).

Will my results tell me if I am immune to COVID-19?

No, this antibody test does not indicate immunity. At this time, science does not have the ability to say for certain that people with this antibody are now immune to COVID-19.

Can my results change over time?

Yes. If you tested your blood early in the process of your body learning how to make this antibody, you could test negative. It takes up to 6 weeks for our bodies to learn how to make this antibody. We do not know how long the positive antibodies will stay but similar antibodies typically remain in the body for years.

Between when I have my COVID-19 antibody testing and when I receive my results, what should I do to stay safe?

Please continue to take the standard precautions that we all should be taking such as washing our hands, covering our face with mask or other face cover when around other people, sheltering in place as much as possible, and distancing ourselves 6 feet from others when in public.

Are any follow up doctor appointments needed based on my results?

If you are currently not having any respiratory symptoms, nothing further needs to be done. If you are currently having respiratory symptoms, please contact your Primary Care Provider.

Depending on my results, should I change the safety precautions that I have been following (wearing masks in public, social distancing, etc.)?

No, we would recommend that all people continue to maintain safety precautions for now.

Am I required to have COVID-19 antibody testing to go out in public or to go to work?

You are not required to get a test in order to go out in public. Some workplaces are asking people to be tested in order to go back to work; however, having the test does not indicate immunity.

Why is the media and the government talking about testing so much?

Having this data from the general population will allow us to know how many people have likely been exposed to the virus and perhaps did not have any symptoms or mild symptoms. It will also give us information about if these antibodies actually do protect us from getting the virus again.