

COVID 19 Antibody Testing

Results of the test show whether you had a recent or prior COVID-19 infection. The antibody test is **not used** for diagnosis of active COVID-19 infection.

What is the COVID-19 Antibody (Serology) test?

COVID-19 antibody test detects antibodies reactive to SARS-CoV-2 viral proteins. This test can be used to assess recent or previous infection with SARS-CoV-2. This test is most accurate when a sample is collected 3-4 weeks after onset of symptoms or 3-4 weeks after exposure.

Does a positive antibody test mean you are immune and protected from re-infection?

At this time, it is not known. Importantly, it is not known how long antibody response to COVID-19 virus lasts.

How long can antibodies be detected?

Based on current studies, antibodies to COVID-19 virus can be detected up to 4 months post-exposure, but levels vary depending on individual immune response as well as disease severity, with levels higher in severe and lower in milder/asymptomatic cases. You can have the virus and have no antibodies detected.

Antibody testing and COVID Vaccines? GET THE SHOT!

A COVID vaccine is recommended no matter the result of the COVID antibody test. A positive test does not mean a vaccine is not needed as we do not know whether natural infection (having had the virus itself) protects against new strains of the virus or prevents transmission.

How to get the test?

Please note: there is a fee associated with this test that the patient must pay. See lab websites below for more information. The test must be ordered by your healthcare provider.

<https://lifelabs.com/test/covid19-antibody/>

<https://www.dynacare.ca/covid19-antibody-test.aspx>

What does the result of the test mean? (from Life Labs Website)

The result of COVID-19 antibody test cannot tell you whether or not you have protective immunity against the virus nor can it tell you whether or not you are infectious (actively shedding virus).

Note that the results may be reported as '**Reactive**' (i.e. positive for antibodies) or '**Non-reactive**' (i.e. negative for antibodies). A detailed explanation of what these terms mean has been provided below:

A **negative** COVID-19 antibody test result means that antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 were not detected in your blood sample. This could mean that:

COVID-19 Antibody Testing

- You have not been infected with SARS-CoV-2, or
- You have been infected with SARS-CoV-2 in the past, but your antibody levels were too low for the test to detect, or
- You have been infected with SARS-CoV-2, but there has not been enough time for antibodies to develop (antibody response varies from person-to-person and can take up to 3-4 weeks post-onset of symptoms or post-exposure to be reliably detectable by antibody assays).

Some studies indicate that a small percentage of people infected with SARS-CoV-2 do not have detectable antibodies (< 4%). Immunocompromised individuals may have low antibody responses to SARS-CoV-2.

A **positive** antibody test result means that antibodies were detected in your blood sample. This typically indicates that:

- You have been infected by SARS-CoV-2 virus in the recent past.
- In rare instances, falsely positive results may be caused by cross-reactivity of the test with other viruses
- The positive result does NOT infer immunity or protection from reinfection.