

Get the Facts: COVID-19 Testing

Testing is critical to reducing and containing the spread of COVID-19. Knowing if you have the virus or not helps you make decisions to protect yourself and your loved ones.

TYPES OF TESTS

Viral tests evaluate whether the virus is present in a respiratory sample and are used to diagnose current infection. Results from these tests help identify and isolate people who are infected in order to minimize transmission. Viral tests can be performed in a laboratory, at a testing site, or [at home or anywhere else](#). Two types of viral tests are used: [nucleic acid amplification tests \(NAATs\)](#) and [antigen tests](#).

Antibody tests are used to detect past infection and are not recommended for diagnosing current infection. Depending on when someone was infected and the timing of the test, the test may not find antibodies in someone with a current COVID-19 infection. In addition, it is not currently proven whether a positive antibody test indicates protection against future infection; therefore, antibody tests should not be used at this time to determine if someone is immune.

WHO SHOULD BE TESTED

- Anyone with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19
- Anyone who has been in [contact](#) with someone with COVID-19 or related symptoms
- Unvaccinated individuals who have been in a high-risk group setting like a large gathering or crowded space
- Unvaccinated individuals who have recently traveled to a [high-risk area](#)

WHEN TO GET TESTED

- **If you have symptoms**, get tested right away. Make an appointment in advance and make sure to stay 6ft from others and wear a mask until you receive a negative test result.
- **If you don't have symptoms**, get tested 3-5-days after your last contact with the sick person. Remember to monitor your symptoms, maintain physical distance from others, and wear a mask.

WAYS TO GET TESTED

Use the City of Chicago's [interactive testing map](#) to find a testing site near you. The map is being

updated frequently and locations are continuously being added. All residents who want a test should first call their primary care provider or healthcare center to get a test. COVID-19 testing is also offered in many pharmacies and healthcare centers. If you don't have a regular doctor or medical insurance, locate a [community health center](#). For a fee travelers and airport employees can also get tested at the [O'Hare](#) or [Midway](#) testing facilities.

- **Your health care provider:** Residents are best served when they're tested by their health care provider, because your health care provider is familiar with your medical history and can provide counselling that helps you understand exactly what your test result means.
- **Community health centers:** If you don't have a health care provider or medical insurance, there are approximately 165 community health centers throughout Chicago, so find one that is close to you at findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov.
- **City of Chicago testing sites:** Alternatively, you can visit one of the City's [community-based testing sites](#). All tests at the City testing sites are available and free to all people regardless of citizenship or insurance status.

CITY OF CHICAGO TESTING SITES

The City of Chicago, in partnership with Rush University Medical Center and Esperanza Health centers, is providing COVID- 19 testing in community testing at no cost to residents. The City's community-based testing program, called Connect Chicago, is designed to supplement testing performed in clinical settings and aims to expand COVID-19 testing in communities with the greatest need and to respond to outbreaks in specific areas. To see the full list of community-based testing sites, please visit chi.gov/covidtesting.

All Chicago community-based testing is available and free to all residents, regardless of immigration status or insurance coverage.

[Appointments](#) and walk-ins are welcomed at Connect Chicago testing sites.

