CDPH
Chicago Department
of Public Health

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.

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
- Anyone who has been in a high-risk group setting like a large gathering or crowded space
- Anyone who has 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 face mask.
- **If you don't have symptoms**, get tested 5-9 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. If you do not have this care of cannot access through your provider, testing is offered by the City of Chicago

- **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.

Connect Chicago testing sites may ask to upload your insurance card or state identification card. **The ability to provide this information in no way affects your access to a COVID-19 test.** Information provided is strictly used for CDPH insurance and federal government reimbursement purposes only. If you're not able to upload your information during the pre-registration process, please bring it to your scheduled appointment. If you are uninsured or do not have a state identification card, you can still receive a free COVID-19 test.

Who pays for COVID-19 tests?
- If you have health insurance, your insurance carrier will be billed for the cost of the test. **By law, the insurance company may not charge you any co-pay, deductible, or any out-of-pocket expense for the test.**
- If you do not have health insurance, the federal government will cover the cost of your test if you upload identification.
- If you do not upload insurance information or identification, the City of Chicago will pay for your test.