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.

RESULTS

If you test positive for COVID-19, you most likely DO currently have an active COVID-19 infection and can give the virus to others. Stay home for 10 days after your symptoms first appeared and at least 24 hours with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) and improved symptoms, whichever is longer.

If you test negative for COVID-19, you most likely DO NOT currently have an active COVID-19 infection. However, even with a negative test result, if you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, been in a high-risk group setting, or traveled to a high-risk area, you must self-quarantine for 14 days. Stay home, check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.
WAYS TO GET TESTED

- **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 free and all people regardless of citizenship status can be tested.
- **Map of COVID-19 testing sites**: You can also 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.

CITY OF CHICAGO TESTING SITES

The City of Chicago, in partnership with Community Organized Relief Effort (CORE), is providing COVID-19 testing in community testing at no cost to residents. The City’s community-based testing program 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.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

While getting tested for COVID-19 is critical for stopping the spread of disease, it is just one element. To protect yourself and others from COVID-19, you should:

- **Stay home if you're sick** (except to get medical care) for 10 days since your symptoms first appeared and at least 24 hours with no fever and improved symptoms, whichever is longer.
- **Stay away from others (quarantine) for 14 days** if you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, been in a high-risk group setting, or traveled to a high-risk area
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick
- **Put 6ft of distance** between yourself and people who don’t live in your household
- **Wear a face covering** when in public and around others
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently-touched surfaces daily, like doorknobs, light switches, phones, and faucets
- **Monitor your health daily** and watch for symptoms of COVID-19
- **Avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces**