

Staff Information Leaflet SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Antibody Test

We are hoping that you can help us to understand more about coronavirus known as COVID-19 so that we can reduce the spread of the disease.

We are offering a blood test to see whether or not people have been exposed to COVID-19.

So that we can gain more information on the virus we will be testing blood samples from every staff member who volunteers for the test.

We would like to test some of your blood to see if you have developed any antibodies against COVID-19.

Antibodies mean that you have had COVID-19 at some time but currently we do not know what this means for your future care.

COVID-19 infections can be very mild and you may not even be aware that you have had COVID-19.

Regardless of the result you must continue to follow the Public Health England guidelines on social distancing and if you think that you or a member of your family may have the virus.

Thank you for helping us in the fight against COVID-19.

Relevant link

The government has provided advice on antibody testing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests>

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this a test for COVID-19?

No, this is not a test for whether you have COVID-19 right now – that is a different test and is done by a swab. The blood test we have taken is to see whether you have made any antibodies to the virus.

If I have had COVID-19, will it show up in this test?

For 80% of people this test will detect if you have had the virus. For 20% it is less reliable, but that does not mean you have not had the virus which is why we are doing these tests, to help us to understand the virus better.

When will I get my test result?

You will get your result from the team that arranged to take the blood, within about 48 hours of the blood test. This might be by text message if you have given us a mobile number. If you do not have a mobile telephone we will discuss other options for getting your result with you.

How will I know that my test result is kept confidential?

We take data protection very seriously. Your results will be held securely and only accessed on a 'need to know' basis. Your line manager will not see your test result. Your GP will have the same access to this result as any other blood tests you have done.

If my test result comes back positive, what does that mean?

A positive result in this test means you have antibodies in your blood, this means that you have had the virus. We do not know at this point if that means you cannot get the virus again, so you must continue to follow Public Health England Guidance.

Does having antibodies mean I am immune?

No, we are unable to say this at this time. This test is to help us to understand the virus and you must continue to follow the guidance on social distancing and isolation.

What if my test result comes back positive and I didn't know I'd ever had COVID-19?

It is possible that you had the virus but did not have any symptoms or had very mild symptoms. You do not need to do anything further and must continue to follow the guidance published by Public Health England.

If my test comes back negative, what does that mean?

A negative result means that we cannot find any antibodies in your blood to COVID-19. Based on this test, we do not know if you have had COVID-19 infection. It does not mean that you do not have any antibodies against COVID-19, it simply means that this test has not detected them.

What if I have had a swab confirming I had COVID-19, and my antibody test is negative?

It is possible to have had COVID-19 but we cannot detect antibodies in the blood test. It is thought that in up to 20% of people with confirmed COVID-19 infection we will not be able to detect any antibodies and you will have a negative test.

It is really important to remember:

- **A positive antibody test does not mean that you are immune to COVID-19**
- **A negative antibody test does not mean that you are not immune to COVID-19**

At this stage, we are still doing research and learning about the virus and COVID-19 infection – so it is really important to do these tests, and we are very grateful for your help.

If you decide to go ahead with this test, please keep this leaflet to refer back to when you get your result.

The government has provided advice on antibody testing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT WITH THIS TEST