SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Antibody Test - A Staff Guide

An information guide
SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Antibody Test - A Staff Guide

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:

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.

Risks and Benefits

Are there any risks to having the test?
There are some risks related to having a blood test, such as feeling dizzy and faint during and after the test but nothing specific to this antibody test.

Risks can also include bruising at the venepuncture site. Serious complications such as an infection at the site where blood was taken and phlebitis (swelling of the vein) are possible but generally extremely unlikely.

Are there any benefits to having the test
The test will only show if you have been exposed to the virus or not.
When will I get my test result?

It may take up to a week for your result to be communicated to you. The result will be delivered 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.

Please DO NOT telephone the lab for your result.

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.

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.
Advice

The government has provided advice on antibody testing:  

The staff testing Helpline is available for support:  
Salford - 0161 789 7373  
North East Sector (Pennine) - 0161 624 0420

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT WITH THIS TEST
If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

اگر انگلیزی آب کی پبی ای زبان نبین بی اور آب کو مدد کی ضرورت بی تو ، برآه کرم ترجماتی اور ترجمه خدمت

Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service  

0161 627 8770

: interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

To improve our care environment for Patients, Visitors and Staff, Northern Care Alliance NHS Group is Smoke Free including buildings, grounds & car parks.
For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

The Northern Care Alliance NHS Group (NCA) is one of the largest NHS organisations in the country, employing 17,000 staff and providing a range of hospital and community healthcare services to around 1 million people across Salford, Oldham, Bury, Rochdale and surrounding areas. Our Care Organisations are responsible for providing our services, delivering safe, high quality and reliable care to the local communities they serve.

The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

Date of publication: June 2020
Date of review: June 2020
Date of next review: June 2022
Ref: PI(C)516
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