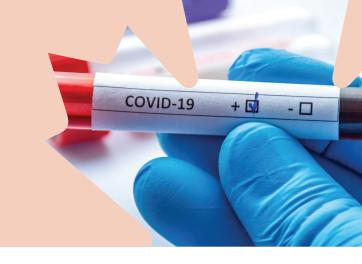
## COVID-19 antibody (serology) testing

Information for patients



### What you should know

- Antibody (serology) tests use a sample of your blood to check for antibodies. Your body makes antibodies after it is infected by a virus or other infectious agents.
- It takes time for your body to make antibodies. They usually start to appear in your blood 7-10 days after your initial infection by the virus.
- It is not known how long antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2 virus will remain present in your body after infection.
- It is not known whether having antibodies to the SARS-CoV-2 virus will protect you from getting infected again or will help reduce how severe or how long a future COVID-19 infection may be. Regardless of your test result, you must continue to follow public health guidelines to reduce the risk of infection.

#### How are people tested for COVID-19?

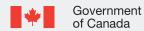
Two kinds of tests are currently available for COVID-19: tests for viral infection and antibody (serology) tests.

- 1. A test for viral infection detects the virus or a component of the virus and tells you if you have a current COVID-19 infection. This is done using a swab from your nose or throat, or a saliva sample.
- 2. An antibody (serology) test tells you if you, at some point, were exposed to the virus and had a COVID-19 infection. This test is done using a sample of your blood.

Serology tests aren't used to diagnose a current SARS-CoV-2 viral infection, since they don't detect the virus itself.



A positive antibody (serology) test means that, at some point, you were infected by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the virus that causes COVID-19. It can't tell how long ago you were infected or confirm that you are immune or protected from being reinfected.





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### What does it mean if you have a positive test result?

- If you have a positive serology test result, it is likely that you previously had a COVID-19 infection and that you developed an antibody response to the virus.
- Receiving a positive result indicates that you have been exposed to the virus but does not necessarily mean that you are immune or protected from being re-infected.
- > There is also a chance that this test can give a positive result that is wrong (a false positive result). Even a very precise antibody test may produce false positive results on occasion.
- If you have questions about the results of your antibody test, it is important to talk to your health care provider to help you understand.

### What does it mean if you have a negative test result?

- If you have a negative serology test result, it likely means that antibodies to the virus that causes COVID-19 were not present in your sample.
- > It is possible for this test to give a negative result that is wrong (a false negative result) even if you have previously been infected with COVID-19.
- › You may also have a negative test result because you were tested too early, before your body had time to produce antibodies.
- If you have questions about the results of your antibody test, it is important to talk to your health care provider to help you understand.

Even if you have previously had a COVID-19 infection, you must still follow public health advice and take the same actions to prevent COVID-19 as someone who has never had the infection:



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.



Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Stay home as much as possible and if you need to leave the house, practice physical distancing (approximately 2 m).



Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hands.



Wear a non-medical mask or face covering to protect others when you can't maintain a 2 metre distance.



Follow the advice of your local public health authority.

Please contact your health care provider with any questions or concerns about your test.