

When to Test

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19:

- Fever or Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or Body Aches
- Headache
- New Loss of Taste or Smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or Runny Nose
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Diarrhea

- If you have a known exposure to someone suspected, or confirmed to have COVID-19.

- If you took part in activities that put you at high risk for COVID-19.

- If your health care provider, or local health department recommends you be tested.

Until you receive the results of your test, please quarantine at home and follow the advice of your health care provider.

Source: [CDC Testing Guidelines](#)

Types of Testing

There are two types of diagnostic testing, molecular/PCR and antigen. Diagnostic tests are used to determine if you have an active COVID-19 infection. Antibody tests look for past COVID-19 infection using a blood sample and should NOT be used for diagnostic purposes.

TYPE OF TEST	MOLECULAR/PCR	ANTIGEN
	Diagnostic	Diagnostic
HOW IS THE SAMPLE TAKEN?	Nasal swabs, either shallow or deep; saliva	Nasal swabs, either shallow or deep
HOW ACCURATE IS THIS TEST?	Highly accurate, usually doesn't need repeated	Positive tests are highly accurate but false negatives can occur if you are asymptomatic
HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR TEST RESULTS?	Typically 3-5 days*	Minutes to hours*

*Please note that time to receive test results will vary.

How Much Does a Test Cost?

The cost of testing varies depending on location, insurance, and availability. No-cost options are available from [Test Iowa](#).

Where Can I Find a Test?

- Contact your health care provider, local pharmacy, or public health agency.
- A [Testing Locator](#) has been added to COVID-19 in Iowa state website, including local options for in-person testing and pick-up/drop-off sites.
- You can request free at-home test kits via the [Test Iowa](#) site.
- Rapid antigen test production is being increased to improve availability.