Understanding Your COVID-19 Test Results

Oregon Health Authority
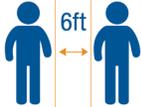PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

There are two kinds of tests for COVID-19.

1. A viral test tests a sample from your nose to see if there is virus in your body.
2. An antibody test tests your blood for signs of past infection.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19

Type of Test	Test Result	What it means	What to do to protect your community
Viral	**+** Positive	You have COVID-19.	Stay home for at least 10 days since you felt ill and until 24 hours after you feel better and fever is gone. / Answer the phone when public health calls. / Call a health care provider if you feel ill.
	- Negative	You may have COVID-19. A negative test is wrong a third of the time.	
Antibody	**+** Positive	You *may* have had COVID-19. About half of positives are wrong. Even if the test is positive, it does not mean that you are protected against the virus.	Stay home until 24 hours after you feel better. [1] / Answer the phone when public health calls. / Call a health care provider if you feel ill.
	- Negative	You probably have **not** had COVID-19.	

[1] If you have had a significant exposure to a case of COVID-19, you will be considered a presumptive case of COVID-19 and asked by public health to stay at home for 10 days regardless of negative results.

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If you do not have symptoms of COVID-19

Type of Test	Test Result	What it means	What to do to protect your community
Viral	**+** Positive	You have COVID-19. You may or may not develop symptoms.	Stay home for 10 days. Answer the phone when public health calls. Call a health care provider if you feel ill.
	− Negative	You may or may not have COVID-19. A negative test may be wrong and does not mean that you are protected from infection.	Stay at least six (6) feet away from people you do not live with.[2] Wear a face covering in public. Wash your hands often.
Antibody	**+** Positive	You *may* have had COVID-19. About half of positives are wrong. Even if the test is positive, it does not mean that you are protected against the virus.	Cover coughs and sneezes. Do not touch your face.
	− Negative	You probably have **not** had COVID-19.	If you feel unwell, contact your health care provider, go home and self-isolate.

Document accessibility: For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the Health Information Center at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsoha.state.or.us.

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[2] If you have had a significant exposure to a case of COVID-19, you will be considered a person under monitoring for COVID-19 and asked by public health to stay at home for 14 days regardless of negative results.