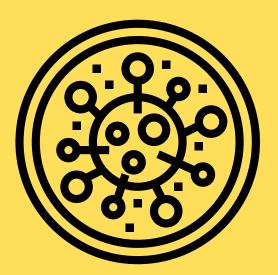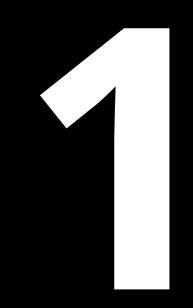# COVID-19 testing

If you think you have COVID-19 (Coronavirus 2019) and need a test, contact your health care provider for an evaluation immediately. If you don't have a healthcare provider call 211 for assistance. Click here to find a testing site.
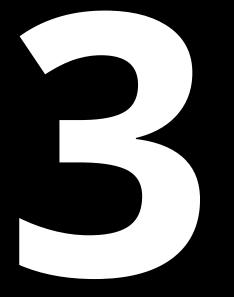
Before getting tested make sure to ask three questions:

1 **Is this a COVID-19 Molecular PCR test?** There are several different types of tests looking for evidence of COVID-19 in the body (see below). The molecular PCR test is the most sensitive and accurate of all the tests currently available. An antigen test is more likely to give false negatives, but neither test is likely to give false positives.

When will I get my results? Providers all have contracts with different labs. These labs may have a testing delay if they get a surge of test requests. Make sure you ask your provider about turnaround before you take the test and know what to do if you don't receive your results on time. If one provider is unable to give you a results in a few days it may be helpful to check with another provider for a faster result time. **2**

3 **How much will this cost?** Just like any other test, your insurance may or may not cover the cost. Different testing facilities will charge different rates. The health district cannot price lock tests for COVID-19.

There are several tests available for COVID-19. These tests check for the disease by testing the level of the virus in your system. Similar to a pregnancy test, it can take several days for the virus to spread enough within your system to show up on a test. Testing too early may give you a false negative. Molecular PCR tests are the most sensitive and will give you the most accurate answer.   Learn more here.

	Molecular Test	Antigen Test	Antibody Test
Also known as...	Diagnostic test, viral test, molecular test, nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), RT-PCR test, LAMP test	Rapid diagnostic test (Some molecular tests are also rapid tests.)	Serological test, serology, blood test, serology test
How the sample is taken...	Nasal or throat swab (most tests) Saliva (a few tests)	Nasal or throat swab	Finger stick or blood draw
How long it takes to get results...	Same day (some locations) or up to a week	One hour or less	Same day (many locations) or 1-3 days
Is another test needed...	This test is typically highly accurate and usually does not need to be repeated.	Positive results are usually highly accurate but negative results may need to be confirmed with a molecular test.	Sometimes a second antibody test is needed for accurate results.
What it shows...	Diagnoses active coronavirus infection	Diagnoses active coronavirus infection	Shows if you've been infected by coronavirus in the past
What it can't do...	Show if you ever had COVID-19 or were infected with the coronavirus in the past	Definitively rule out active coronavirus infection. Antigen tests are more likely to miss an active coronavirus infection compared to molecular tests. Your health care provider may order a molecular test if your antigen test shows a negative result but you have symptoms of COVID-19.	Diagnose active coronavirus infection at the time of the test or show that you do not have COVID-19

Source: FDA