# COVID-19 TESTING FACT SHEET

The information provided is intended to help you understand the COVID-19 PCR test and COVID-19 antibody serology test. If you have further questions or would like to discuss any of the information, please talk to your healthcare provider.

**What is Coronavirus?** COVID-19 is a new respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

**How long will it take to get my results?** It takes on average between 1-3 days to obtain results.  This may change depending on the supply, demand, or capacity of the lab to run the tests. The tests performed are under EUA.  Although rare,  if you feel you have any adverse effects from the performance of this test or problems with the results, report them to MedWatch by submitting the online FDA Form 3500 or by calling 1-800-FDA-1088.

**How will this affect me?** *Currently there is no specific antiviral treatment or vaccine available.  It is important to contact your healthcare provider to determine your best course of care. Call ahead to avoid exposing others.* **If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.**  Regardless of results, continue to practice social distancing (staying 6 feet away from other persons) and avoid large gatherings.  Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.  Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Stay home when you are sick . Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or clean tissue. Disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces including your electronic devices.

**Why is testing important?** A positive or negative result may not change your immediate treatment but is an important factor in determining your best course of care. Diagnostic testing is also an essential component for health care authorities to get a better sense of how this disease is spreading.  Appropriately validated tests, when used broadly, may help guide containment strategies, prioritize actions and help researchers determine what is needed or effective. These tests can also be useful to examine patterns, to determine which communities may have had more cases, suggesting more 'herd immunity' which reflects the degree of resistance to infection in a population.

**Can I return to work?**  Please speak with your employer for your specific return to work guidelines. Returning to work is dependent on both test results, availability of tests, and symptoms. You may refer to the CDC guidelines for more information at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html

## COVID-19 PCR Testing

**How is the test performed?** The test performed (SARS-CoV-2 RNA, Qualitative Real-Time RT-PCR) is used to detect if the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is active in your swab specimen.

**What does it mean if I have a detected (positive) test result?** If you have a "detected" test result, it is interpreted as a presumptive positive result and you likely have COVID-19.  Your sample will be sent to a Public Health laboratory for confirmation.  It is not often this test will produce an incorrect positive result (false positive).

The majority of  people with a positive result never require an ER visit or hospital stay. Many only experience mild symptoms.  If positive, it is important to self-isolate to avoid spreading the virus to others. Avoid public areas or having visitors.  Seek medical treatment if your symptoms are not improving or worsening.

**What does it mean if I have a "not detected" (negative) test result?** A not detected (negative) test result means the virus that causes COVID-19 was not found in your sample. For COVID-19, a negative test result for a sample collected while a person has symptoms usually means COVID-19 did not cause your recent illness.

It is possible for this test to give a negative result that is incorrect (false negative).  Because this test is not 100% accurate, having a negative result does not mean you should discontinue recommended isolation measures.

## COVID-19 Antibody Serology Testing

**How is the test performed?** Asymptomatic patients may be given an IgG antibody serology test by blood draw to detect  SARS-CoV-2 antibodies. This will help identify those who may have been previously exposed to or overcame SARS-CoV-2.  This test should not be used to diagnose an active SARS-CoV-2 infection and should not be used as the sole basis to diagnose or exclude SARS-CoV-2 infection or to inform infection status.

**What does it mean if I have a positive test result?** IgG antibodies are generally detectable in blood several days after the initial infection. At this time, it is not known for how long these antibodies last and if the presence of antibodies confers protective immunity.  It is possible for this test to give an incorrect positive test (false positive), especially if a patient has had a past or present infection with non-SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus strains, such as coronavirus HKU1, NL63, OC43, or 229E.

**What does it mean if I have a negative test result?** A negative test result means antibodies for the COVID-19 virus was not found in your sample.  It is possible for this test to give a negative result that is incorrect (false negative).  A negative result may occur if you have been tested too early and your body hasn't had time to produce antibodies to infection.  Negative results must be combined with clinical observations, patient history, and epidemiological information.