



What is antibody (serology) testing?

Antibodies are proteins that help your body fight off infections. The body makes antibodies that are specific for different germs. Antibody blood tests, also called serology tests, check your blood by looking for these antibodies against specific germs. These tests may show if you had a previous infection with a germ like COVID-19.

Can antibody testing tell me if I had COVID-19?

Antibody tests may show if you had a previous infection with COVID-19; however they are not meant to diagnose new infections. It takes time for the body to make antibodies against COVID-19, so an antibody test may be negative for days to weeks after an infection. The better test for a new infection is a molecular test that looks for the presence of virus in your nose or throat.

If my antibody test is positive, does it mean I am protected from COVID-19?

A positive antibody test for COVID-19 likely means that your body was exposed to the virus (or a related coronavirus) at some point in the previous weeks or months. However, we do not yet fully understand what this means for long-term protection against the virus. There are many studies currently being completed to better understand the body's immune response to COVID-19.

If my antibody test is negative, does it mean I didn't have COVID-19?

A negative antibody test for COVID-19 means that you probably did not have COVID-19 infection; however there are some people infected with COVID-19 that do not produce antibodies. It can also take 1-3 weeks after infection for antibodies to be detected.

What antibody tests are available?

There are currently* 8 antibody tests that have received emergency authorization from the Food & Drug Administration (FDA). However, there are many more tests available on the market that may not have been appropriately validated for COVID-19 or reviewed by the FDA.

Learn More

- Online: www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/serology-overview.html>