



### What is an antigen test?

- **Antigen tests** detect the presence of a specific viral protein in a collected sample. This protein is known as an antigen and is on the surface of the COVID-19 virus.
- **Antigen tests** perform best when the person is tested in the early stages of infection with COVID-19.

### What is the difference between an antigen test and a PCR test?

- A **PCR** (polymerase chain reaction) is a molecular test for COVID-19 that is performed in a laboratory and detects a virus's genetic material.
- **Antigen tests** for COVID-19 are generally less able to detect the virus than a **PCR** test.

### What does it mean if my antigen test is positive?

- A positive test indicates antigen from the COVID-19 virus was detected and you are presumed to be infected.
- Positive results on an **antigen test** are fairly reliable, meaning that the test is generally positive only when the COVID-19 virus is present in your specimen.
- Sometimes a swab or test kit can get contaminated during the process of running an antigen Test and cause the test to be positive when in fact you are not infected, this is called a **false positive**.
- Your healthcare provider can assist in understand the meaning of a positive antigen test.

### Isolate Yourself

- Refer to: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/Isolation-QuarantineRelease.pdf>
- CDC recommendations provide that cases should isolate for a minimum of 5 days after onset and may be released after they are without fever for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication) and show improvement in symptoms.
- Cases without symptoms should isolate through 5 days after their specimen collection date.
- Regardless of symptoms, CDC recommends wearing a well-fitting mask when around others for 10 days following symptom onset or test collection (whichever was first).
- Though not legally binding, CDC recommends:
  - Stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home to the extent possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available. Household contacts can consider relocating to a separate, uninhabited housing location if available to decrease their risk of exposure.
  - Where possible, ask others such as friends or family, to get food or necessities for you.
  - If you need to leave home, such as to seek medical care, wear a mask.

### Inform Your Close Contacts

- Your close contacts including members of your household should refer to: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/Isolation-QuarantineRelease.pdf>
- For information on what to expect if you were possibly exposed to COVID refer to: <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/CloseContactGuidance.pdf>

### Monitor Your Health

- Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated and, if needed, take medication to reduce your fever.
- If your symptoms get worse and you need to seek healthcare, call ahead and tell the provider that you have been diagnosed with COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

### Practice Healthy Habits

- Though not legally binding, CDC recommends:
  - Wear a mask in public settings when around others for 10 days following symptom onset or test collection (whichever was first).
  - Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for  $\geq 20$  seconds, or use alcohol-based hand rub.
  - Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces regularly, including your phone.



### Returning to Regular Activities

- Once you've completed your isolation period at home, you can return to your regular activities.
- Both the CDC and TDH discourage employers and schools from requiring a medical note for clearance to return to work or school after an individual has COVID-19. TDH does not provide isolation or quarantine "clearance" letters to individuals. Those who test positive for COVID-19 may provide their employers with documentation of their positive test result (such as a photo, print out of lab results, or note from a provider that administered the test) to indicate their need for exclusion from in-person activities during their period of isolation. Employers and schools are encouraged to provide access to sick leave, telework, and other accommodations without individual documentation from a doctor or nurse regarding an individual's need to stay home.

### Learn More

- Tennessee Department of Health: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Questions? Call (615) 770-6940