

COVID-19 Self-Tests

A COVID-19 self-test (also called an at-home test or over-the-counter test) is a type of COVID-19 test that is easy to use and gives fast results at home. You can use a self-test to help you make decisions that reduce your chances of spreading COVID-19.

You can use a self-test regardless of vaccination status, symptoms, or exposure.



When should I consider using a self-test?

You may consider using a self-test if you have symptoms of COVID-19, were exposed to COVID-19, or plan to gather indoors with others outside of your household.



If you have symptoms and have access to a self-test, use it immediately.



If you were exposed to someone with COVID-19, use a self-test at least 5 full days after your last exposure.



If you or the people around you have risk factors for severe illness, test immediately before the gathering or as close in time to the event as possible.

How can I get a self-test?

- Buy a self-test over-the-counter at a pharmacy or retail store.
- Some health insurance companies will reimburse the cost of purchasing self-tests.
- If you are not able to find a self-test when you need one, contact your local or Tribal health department for help finding a test.

How do I use a self-test?

Follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly to collect your specimen and perform the test. If you do not collect your specimen or perform the test as directed, your results may not be accurate.



What do my self-test results mean?



I tested positive with a self-test. What should I do?

A positive COVID-19 test means the virus was detected and you have or recently had an infection. **If you have symptoms, stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick).** You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
- You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

When you go back to your normal activities, take **added precaution over the next 5 days**, such as opening windows to bring in fresh outside air or using air purifiers, masking, and physical distancing when you will be around other people indoors.

Contact a health care provider about **COVID-19 treatments if you are at higher risk for severe illness**. If you think your positive test result may be incorrect, contact a health care provider to determine whether more testing is necessary.



I tested negative with a self-test. What should I do?

If you tested negative with a COVID-19 self-test, have not been recently exposed, and do not have COVID-19 symptoms, you likely do not have COVID-19. You do not need to retest or stay home and away from others.

If you test negative and have symptoms of COVID-19, test again 48 hours after the first negative test. If you retest, consider asking a health care provider for a molecular test, such as a PCR test, which may provide more accurate results. If you test negative, you may have another respiratory virus and should still take steps to protect those around you.

If you have any questions about your test results, contact a health care provider.

Additional resources

More information on self-testing: www.dhs.wi.gov/covid-19/self-testing.htm

Information on other testing options: www.dhs.wi.gov/covid-19/testing.htm

Information on treatments: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/treatments.htm

