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 produces rapid results at home. You can use a self-test to help you make decisions that reduce your chances of spreading COVID-19. Depending on the type of self-test you use, it may be supervised by a telehealth care provider over a video call.

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 are testing before a gathering, 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.
- Order a free test online from the federal government at COVIDTests.gov.

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?

If you have symptoms, wear a well-fitting mask around others and isolate for at least 5 full days. You can end isolation after 5 full days if you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved. Continue to wear a well-fitting mask when around others in your home and in public for an additional 5 days after your isolation period.

If you test positive for COVID-19 and you do not have symptoms, wear a well-fitting mask around others and isolate for 5 full days. Continue to wear a mask around others at home and in public for an additional 5 days after your isolation period. If you develop symptoms after testing positive, your isolation period should start over.

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

If you tested negative with a COVID-19 self-test, it means the virus that causes COVID-19 was not detected and you likely do not have COVID-19 at this time. If you test negative after being exposed to COVID-19, you should continue following instructions for quarantine and mask-wearing. Visit www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/close-contacts.htm for more information.

If you took the self-test while you had symptoms and followed all instructions carefully, a negative result means your current illness may not be COVID-19. However, it does not rule out COVID-19 infection entirely. You may consider taking another self-test 24 to 48 hours later, or getting a different viral test at a pharmacy, community testing site, or health care provider. **Contact your health care provider for help determining whether you should get a different COVID-19 test.**

Additional resources

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

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

Instructions for isolation: www.dhs.wi.gov/diagnosed.htm

Instructions for quarantine: www.dhs.wi.gov/close-contacts.htm

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