

Testing for COVID-19

Why is getting tested important?

DHEC continues to emphasize the importance of testing. While many people with COVID-19 have mild or no symptoms, it is still possible that they could be infected and pass the disease to friends, family and loved ones. Meanwhile, others don't know that they've been in close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with someone with confirmed COVID-19. Therefore, we continue to provide no out-of-pocket costs community testing events open to anyone who would like to be tested.

Who should get tested?

Anyone who would like to be tested.

In addition, DHEC recommends routine testing of individuals with known exposures or concerns about exposures. Routine testing allows public health workers to diagnose those who are asymptomatic and interrupt the ongoing spread of the virus.

If you are out and about in the community or around others, participating in group events, or not able to socially distance or wear a mask, we recommend that you receive routine testing once a month or sooner if someone you've been around tests positive or if you develop symptoms.

You should also get tested if:

- **You're having any of these symptoms:**
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
- Your doctor or health care provider recommends it for you.
- You live with or have been around someone that:
 - has recently **tested positive**,
 - suspects they **may have** COVID-19, or
 - is **having symptoms** of COVID-19.

Help protect yourself and others by preventing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Get tested.

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What types of tests are there for COVID-19?

There are two types of tests for COVID-19:

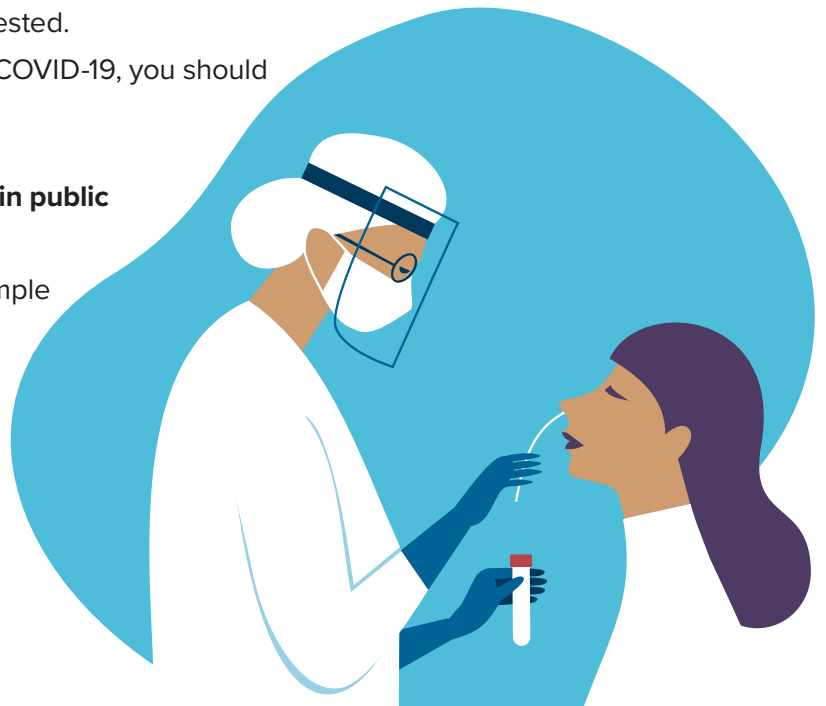
- The **viral test** will tell if you are currently infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.
- An **antibody test** will tell you if you have previously been infected. However, there is not enough research yet to know if antibodies can protect someone from getting infected again.

Why should you get tested for COVID-19?

- Getting tested will help you to protect yourself, your loved ones and your community.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 may be similar to other common illnesses and can vary from person to person and getting tested can let you know for sure if you have the virus.
- Some people who are infected may have no symptoms. This means you could spread the virus without even knowing it.
- Minority groups and those with health conditions are at increased risk for severe illness and death from COVID-19.

What should you expect when you get tested for COVID-19?

1. The healthcare professional will take a sample from your nose (nasal swab) or saliva. New nasal testing methods are pain-free and shallower than previous tests.
2. Your test sample will be sent to a laboratory to be tested.
3. If symptomatic or a close contact of someone with COVID-19, you should do the following while waiting for your test results:
 - **Self-isolate at home**
 - **Wear a mask and social distance if you must be in public**
 - **Seek medical care if symptoms worsen**
4. The healthcare professional who collected your sample will contact you with the results of your test.
5. The healthcare professional will discuss what your results mean when they contact you. It is important to remember that a negative result now does not mean you can't get sick later.
6. Whether you test positive or negative for COVID-19, you should continue to take preventive measures to protect yourself and others.



Visit sdcdec.gov/COVID19 for more information.