# Vaccines & Testing

## Why it works, and what to keep in mind

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## Getting vaccinated vs. Getting infected

Getting vaccinated is a much safer way to build protection than getting the disease itself. Airborne viral diseases like COVID-19 and measles have serious, long-term, and even life-threatening complications and can quickly spread and make others sick too.

⚠ **Fact check**

**Myth:** The best level of protection comes from having experienced the disease before.

**Fact:** As with other vaccine-preventable diseases, your best level of protection comes from staying up to date on all vaccines.

## How vaccines work

Vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus without getting infected.

**1**

### Exposure

Vaccines introduce a weakened or inactive version of the virus, which contains antigens in the body that can be recognized by the immune system.*

**2**

### Recognition

The immune system recognizes the exposure and starts producing a response against it.

**3**

### Immune response

The immune system produces specific antibodies to neutralize the infectious agent introduced by the vaccine.

**4**

### Memory cells formation

The immune system creates memory cells that "remember" the specific infectious agent and how to fight it.

**5**

### Protection

If the person is later exposed to the actual infectious agent, the immune system recognizes it and produces a quick and robust immune response.

*Modern vaccines may contain only components of the disease-causing virus with the instructions for producing antigens instead of the antigens themselves. Components of the virus do not have the capability to cause disease in a person.

⚠ **Fact check**

**Myth:** If you get vaccinated, you will not be infected if exposed.

**Fact:** Getting a vaccine does not mean you will not be infected if exposed. However, vaccines protect people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and sometimes dying.

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## Vaccine side effects

You might experience side effects after your vaccine, which is a normal sign that your body is building up its protection. The most common symptoms are:

- A sore or swollen arm
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Fever
- Chills

⚠️ **Fact check**

**Myth:** If I don't have side effects, that means the vaccine didn't work.

**Fact:** Even if you don't experience any side effects, your body is building protection against the virus.

## The risk of not getting vaccinated

A workforce with a large population of non-vaccinated people can pose a risk to the communities in which they work, causing:

Higher amount of non-vaccinated people infected with an airborne virus in a defined space:

=

**Higher:**

- Risk of transmitting it to others.
- Causing breakthrough infections in those vaccinated.

### A lack of productivity

If we can't minimize the impact of the new strains of COVID-19, the future may look a lot like the past – more isolation, more closures, more revenue loss and so on.

### An increase in long-term illnesses

Those who get COVID-19 without being vaccinated could develop long-term disabilities from long COVID-19. Some might need workplace accommodations, while others might not be able to return to the workforce.

### An increase in absenteeism

Employees, customers, and clients might be more hesitant about coming to a workplace with lower rates of employee vaccination.

# Let's talk about COVID-19 testing

Testing immediately when presenting COVID-19-like symptoms helps confirm if you have it and reduces the chances of putting the health and safety of those around you at risk.

## Types of COVID-19 tests

**1  PCR-based tests**

These tests are performed in a laboratory and are the most reliable test for people with or without symptoms. These tests detect viral genetic material, which may stay in your body for up to 90 days after you test positive.

**2  Antigens tests, or rapid test**

These tests generate results in 15-30 minutes. Remember that positive self-test results are highly reliable but that a single antigen test negative result does not rule out infection, especially if you have symptoms.

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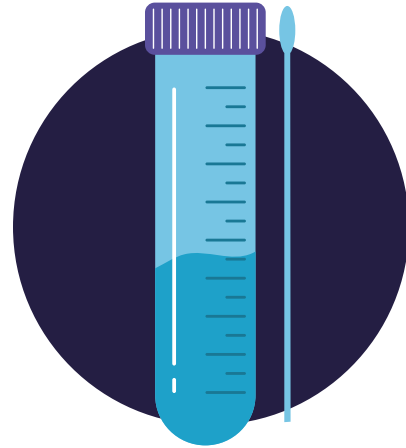
⚠️ **Fact check**

**Myth:** I cannot trust the results of a rapid test.

**Fact:**
- Positive results from self-tests are highly reliable.

- Negative results from self-tests do not rule out SARS-CoV-2 infection. A negative self-test result may not be reliable, especially if you have symptoms associated with COVID-19.

- Invalid results from self-tests mean the test did not work properly, and a new test is needed to get an accurate result.

- A retest is suggested the following day when presenting symptoms.

## How to read COVID-19 rapid test results

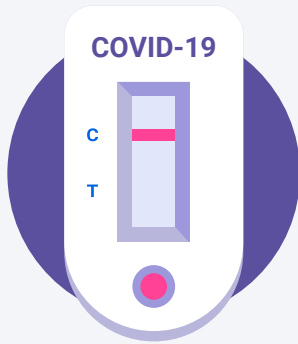COVID-19
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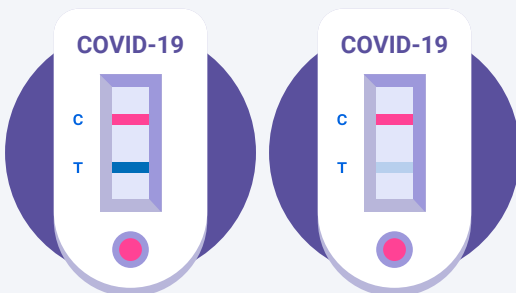
**Positive result:**

**Two colored lines appear**

A colored line should always appear in the Control (C) region, and another line should be in the Test (T) region. A positive result indicates the detection of SARS-CoV-2 antigens in the sample.
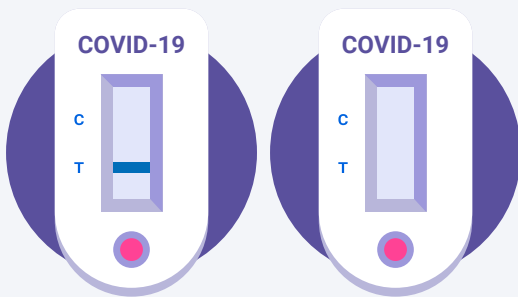
### Negative result:

**A colored line appears in the Control (C) region.**

**No line appears in the Test (T) region.**

A negative result indicates that the detection threshold of SARS-CoV-2 antigens in the sample has not been reached. There is still the chance of an infection if the concentration of antigens in the sample is too low to be detected by the rapid antigen test.

### Invalid result:

**The control line does not appear.**

Insufficient diluent or incorrect procedure are the most likely reasons for the absence of the control line. Review the procedure and repeat the test with a new device.

## Final recommendations

If you test positive, the CDC encourages individuals to report the result to their healthcare provider and any recent or close contacts so that they can keep themselves and those around them safe.

If you are in a high-risk setting or around vulnerable populations, consistent testing as part of a screening program can help protect those around you from unintentional infection.

Remember to follow quarantine guidelines as mandated by your employer or state health department.