



The Pathology Laboratory
830 West Bayou Pines Dr.
Lake Charles, LA 70601
(337) 436-9557 Fax (337) 312-1311
www.thepathlab.com

Lehrue Stevens, Jr., M.D., Emeritus
Gault Townsend, M.D., Emeritus
Regina Burton, M.D.

Paula Eapen, M.D.
Brandi Kelly, M.D.
Thad Primeaux, M.D.

Stephanie Richard, M.D.
Robert Rumsey, M.D.
John VanHoose, M.D.

Frequently Asked Questions COVID-19 Virus and Testing

Q: Does The Path Lab offer COVID-19 PCR testing?

A: The Path lab offers molecular testing on two platforms. The Hologic Panther offers NAAT testing and the BD Max offers PCR testing. Validations studies have been performed that prove these methods are 100% comparable. Patient fact sheets are available on our website at www.thepathlab.com under the News & Events tab.

Q: I don't feel well. Should I be tested for COVID-19?

A: You should contact your healthcare provider for guidance.

Q: I have been exposed. Should I be tested for COVID-19?

A: It takes time for the virus to build up in your body. If you were within 6 feet of a positive COVID-19 patient for more than 15 minutes, you should quarantine for 14 days. Testing may not be necessary. Consult with your physician for testing guidance.

Q: I am having surgery. Do I need a COVID-19 PCR test?

A: It depends on what the surgery center requires. Consult with your physician and/or surgery center for testing guidance.

Q: Can I have COVID-19 testing performed without a doctor's order?

A: Yes. If you do NOT have insurance, the government will cover the cost. If you have Medicare, they will cover the cost. If you do have insurance, you will be responsible for the cost of \$145.

Q: I need results today. Is your COVID-19 test a rapid test?

A: No, it is NOT a rapid test. It may take up to 48 hours for The Path Lab to report a COVID-19 test result that was performed in-house. We are currently only testing priority COVID-19 specimens in-house when we have enough reagents to do so. Priority patients are hospital patient, pre-op patients, symptomatic healthcare workers, nursing home patients, and symptomatic high risk patients. All others are sent to an out of state reference lab.

Q: How do I get my test results?

A: Results may be picked up from The Path Lab 72 hours after they have been reported to your ordering physician. If ordered as direct to consumer, you may pick up results once reported.

"Providing High Quality Pathology Services, With Superior Customer Satisfaction"

Q: What is the turnaround time (TAT) for a COVID-19 PCR test?

A: If performed in-house, TAT is up to 48 hours. If sent out to a reference lab, TAT is up to 14 days. Decisions to test in-house vs. sending out depends on the patient's priority level.

Q: What does COVID-19 priority level testing mean?

A: Currently, The Path Lab is testing COVID-19 priority patients in-house, and non-priority patients are sent to an out of state reference lab. **Priority patients** are hospital patient, pre-op patients, symptomatic healthcare workers, nursing home patients, and symptomatic high risk patients. **Non-priority patients** are patients who are not sick, but want to know if they currently have the virus.

Note: The priority level testing applies to COVID-19 PCR testing only.

Q: What is the turnaround time (TAT) for a COVID-19 antibody test?

A: Testing is performed in-house and may take up to 48 hours to report.

Q: Should I have the COVID-19 PCR or antibody test performed?

A: It depends on if you are looking for current or past infection. **Current infection** should be diagnosed using the PCR test. **Past infection** may be determined using the antibody test.

Note: Antibody testing will not be positive for at least 10-15 days after initial infection; therefore, antibody testing should not be used for return to work or pre-surgery reasons. Positive antibody testing only shows that you have likely had COVID-19 in the past, and does not confer immunity from future infections. It is possible to get COVID-19 more than once.

Q: What does a positive COVID-19 PCR or antibody test result mean?

A: A **positive PCR** test result means you are currently infected with COVID-19. Follow your physician's directions and/or current quarantine guidelines. While it is possible for you to infect others, it does not mean that you need to be hospitalized.

A **positive antibody** test result means you were likely previously infected with COVID-19. You likely cannot infect others unless you have contracted COVID-19 infection again.

Note: There is some cross reactivity for other coronaviruses in the antibody test, so a positive result is possible from other coronavirus past infections.

Q: Does a negative test result mean that I don't have COVID-19?

A: Not necessarily. For the PCR test, you must have a high enough viral load built up in your body to get a positive result. So if you test too soon in the course of the infection, the test result may be negative even though you have *current* infection. Likewise, if you have the antibody test performed before your body develops antibodies, the test result may be negative even though you've had *past* infection.

Q: Does a positive antibody test result mean I am immune from future COVID-19 infections?

A: Not necessarily. The body can make different types of antibodies, some of which confer immunity and some of which do not. Current testing does not distinguish the type of antibody you make. So even if you make antibodies, you may not be immune to future infections. Furthermore, it is not known how long the antibodies last in your body, but the current theory is approximately 2-3 months. Just because you've had COVID-19 infection does not mean you cannot get it again.

Q: If my COVID-19 PCR test result is positive, how long must I quarantine from work?

A: You should not return to work until at least 3 days have passed without having symptoms and 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

Q: Is there a free mobile testing site?

A: Yes. Go to the Louisiana Office of Public Health website (www.ldh.la.gov) and search Covid-19 Testing Sites.