



PUBLIC GUIDANCE FOR AT-HOME COVID-19 TESTING (ANTIGEN TEST KIT RESULTS)

[Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus)

September 13, 2021

COVID-19, the illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, is extremely contagious. Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea, and skin rashes. Some people with COVID-19 may have increased shortness of breath and severe disease about one week after symptoms start. If at any time, you have difficulty breathing (for example, cannot speak in full sentences without stopping to take a breath) or other emergency symptoms (for example, signs of a stroke like confusion or weakness or loss of feeling in one part of your body), call 911 or go to an emergency room.

Testing is critically important to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. **If you have symptoms or have had a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, you should be tested regardless of your vaccination status.**

If you need to be tested for COVID-19 and can't get tested by a health care provider, you can consider using either a **self-collection kit** or a **self-test** that can be performed at home or anywhere else. Sometimes a self-test is also called a "home test" or an "at-home test." Currently, there are five at-home testing kits available: Abbot BinaxNow, Cue Health, Ellume, Quidel QuickVue, and Lucira. These self-collection kits and tests are available either by prescription or over the counter without a prescription in a pharmacy or retail store.

There is school-specific guidance for managing students exposed to COVID-19: [MI Safer Schools Guidance for Managing Students Exposed to COVID-19](#).

Performing The Test

Follow the manufacturer's instructions exactly and perform the steps in the order that they are listed. The manufacturer may also provide other resources, such as quick reference guides or instructional videos, to help you perform the test correctly.

What Do My Results Mean?

Negative Results

A negative test result means that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, was not found in your specimen. If you took the test while you had symptoms and followed all instructions carefully, a negative result means your current illness is probably not COVID-19.

Depending on contact with other people, here are the steps to take after your negative test result:

- **The test results were negative, and you have been in contact with a person confirmed with COVID-19:**
 - **If you are not sick (asymptomatic)** and are not fully vaccinated, quarantine for at least 10 days after your last contact with the person with COVID-19.
 - **Re-test** 24-36 hours following the negative test result if you do not have symptoms (asymptomatic).
 - If you are fully vaccinated and have no symptoms, you do not need to quarantine, but continue to wear a mask around others for 14 days. Testing is recommended three to five days after exposure.
 - **If you are sick (symptomatic)** and have been in contact to a COVID-19 case, you should isolate for 10 days after becoming ill and be re-tested at a medical facility or [testing site](#) to confirm the negative result.
- **The test results were negative, and you have not had contact with a person with COVID-19:**
 - **If you are not sick (asymptomatic)** and have not been in contact with a person with COVID-19, there is no need to isolate or quarantine.
 - **If you are sick (symptomatic)** and have NOT been in contact with a COVID-19 case, it is still good practice to stay away from others until you have not had a fever for at least 24 hours (without using medicine that reduces fever) and your other symptoms are getting better.
 - You could consider getting tested at a medical facility or [testing site](#) to confirm the negative result.

Positive Results

If you test positive, it is important that you take additional steps right away to protect friends, family, coworkers, and others around you. You can also check to see if you qualify for [COVID-19 treatments](#).

Isolate From Others Right Away

Whether or not you have symptoms, stay away from other people for 10 days after the date that you first became sick (or 10 days after your positive test if you do not have symptoms).

- You should stay home during this time, except to get medical care or additional testing. If you get additional testing or seek medical care, let them know about the positive result from your at-home COVID-19 test prior to your arrival, if possible, or immediately upon arrival, and wear a mask over your mouth and nose.
 - **NOTE:** You can stop isolating yourself from other people after 10 days as long as symptoms are improving and you have been without a fever for 24 hours without using any medicine that reduces fever, such as acetaminophen (example: Tylenol) or ibuprofen (example: Advil or Motrin). If you are immunocompromised or were severely ill, you may need to isolate for longer than 10 days, possibly up to 20 days. Consult your physician.

- If you live with other people, stay away from them, including using a separate bathroom when possible. Wear a mask over your nose and mouth and practice frequent hand washing if you need to be in common areas of the home.

Let Others (Close Contacts) Know They May Have Been Exposed

Beginning two days before you became sick (or your positive test if you do not have symptoms), contact everyone you were around (within six feet) for more than 15 minutes in a 24-hour period to let them know about your positive results, regardless of their vaccine status. These are considered close contacts and they should quarantine for a minimum of 10 days from their last contact with you. When considering who to notify, think about home, work, school, worship, and recreation. People you spend the most time with are at the most risk. It is particularly important to notify schools of potential exposures associated with any school-related activities.

- During quarantine, anyone who is not fully vaccinated should stay home and away from other people. Close contacts who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine if they don't have symptoms, but they should get tested three to five days after exposure and wear a mask for 14 days when around others.
 - If any close contacts become sick, regardless of vaccination status, they should stay away from other people for at least 10 days after becoming sick except to get medical care or testing. Testing is recommended for anyone who is considered a close contact and becomes ill.
- Time period example: John is around Beth on May 1. John becomes ill on May 2. John takes a COVID-19 test and has a positive result on May 4. Because John was around Beth within two days of becoming ill, John should let Beth know that she should stay away from people for at least 10 days after they were last together (until at least May 11). John should stay away from other people until May 12. He can start to be around other people beginning on May 13 as long as his symptoms are improving, and he has not had a fever for at least 24 hours without medicine that reduces fever.

You Can Seek Medical Care

If you have a doctor, call to inform them of your positive test result. They can provide information based on your personal health. Seek medical care if you are at high-risk¹ of becoming seriously ill (see list below), or start to develop more severe illness.

¹Risk factors include but are not limited to cancer, cerebrovascular disease, kidney disease, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), Diabetes type 1 and type 2, obesity, heart conditions, pregnancy or recent pregnancy, current or former smoking, children with certain underlying conditions, Down syndrome, HIV, neurological conditions, including dementia, lung disease, sickle cell disease, solid organ or blood stem cell transplantation, substance use disorders, and use of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive medicine.

- Many people qualify for treatment to reduce the risk of becoming very sick. Talk to your doctor to see if you should consider monoclonal antibody therapy. Learn about treatment options at Michigan.gov/COVIDTherapy.

You Can Confirm Your Results

To confirm your results, go to a medical facility or a lab for a confirmatory test. Testing sites can be located through the [testing website](#).

- **If your confirmatory test result is positive**, finish your isolation period.
 - Keep your confirmatory test result - you may not need to quarantine if exposed to COVID-19 again within the next three months.
- **If your confirmatory test result is negative** within 48 hours of your positive at-home test, **and** you don't have symptoms, you may stop isolation.
 - Continue to check yourself for symptoms of illness. If you do become ill, stay away from others and test again.
 - Testing 48 hours **after** the positive at-home test, regardless of results, cannot be used to stop isolation.

Error, Canceled Or Invalid Results

- You may try a different at-home test or get tested at a medical site. Testing sites can be located through the [MDHHS COVID-19 Testing Website](#).
- If you are ill, go to a testing site for another COVID-19 test (see above for the testing website). Wear a mask over your mouth and nose and let them know that you are ill, but unable to complete an at-home COVID-19 test.
- Except for getting tested or medical care, stay home and avoid contact with other people. Wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose and practice frequent hand washing.

How To Report Test Results

Some at-home antigen tests have systems that allow for reporting results to public health. You can report your at-home antigen test results to your [local health department](#).

Questions

If you have questions about interpreting test results, the need to quarantine or isolate, or how to notify your contacts, contact your [local health department](#).

If you have concerns or questions about your personal health, contact your doctor, healthcare provider, or an urgent care facility.