



COVID-19 antibody testing and results explained

Antibody testing identifies antibodies that the body's immune system develops in response to being exposed to a virus.

The antibody test is performed on a blood sample and looks for the presence of the IgG antibody which develops in response to the immune system being exposed to a virus. The IgG antibody is not present at the start of an infection and usually develops after the first 14 days. The optimal time to check for the IgG antibody is 21 days post-onset of infection and they can be detected in the blood for several weeks to months after, or even for life. The IgG antibody does not tell you if you currently have the virus in your body.

Given that COVID-19 is a new virus in humans, there is still a lack of adequate clinical information on when immunity develops and how long it will last for. Some forms of IgG antibodies confer immunity for a short period, allowing for re-infection, whilst other IgG antibodies confer lifelong immunity.

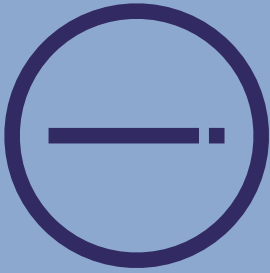
Please note that the IgG antibody result does not detract from government guidance for continued self-isolation if symptomatic, ongoing social distancing, good hygiene with appropriate handwashing, infection control measures using face masks, and staying at home unless travel is essential.

Interpreting test results



Positive result

- ◆ A positive COVID-19 IgG antibody test means that you have previously had or have been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19, and that your immune system developed antibodies in response to it
- ◆ Exposure to the COVID-19 virus in most cases would have resulted in symptoms of an infection. However, a small percentage of the population may carry the virus and develop antibodies to it without developing symptoms (asymptomatic carriers)
- ◆ A positive result does not mean you now have immunity to the virus (it is unclear still whether the COVID-19 IgG antibodies confers lifelong immunity and there is evidence of some people developing the illness more than once)
- ◆ A positive result does not mean you cannot pass the virus to others (it is possible to have had a past exposure resulting in IgG antibody production but contract the virus again)
- ◆ A positive result does not mean you can ignore social distancing, good hygiene and infection control measures.



Negative result

A negative COVID-19 IgG antibody test means that your immune system has not developed antibodies in response to the virus that causes COVID-19. This could be for several different reasons:

- You have not been exposed to the COVID-19 virus (true negative result)
- You have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus, but your immune system has not produced the antibodies in response to the virus (false negative).

This can occur because:

- 1 | The test was performed too soon after the onset of the infection (IgG antibodies are produced after 14 days from the onset of infection, with optimal levels being detected after day 21).
- 2 | Your immune system responded to the COVID-19 virus without producing the IgG antibodies.



To find out more visit
nuffieldhealth.com/workplace-covid-19-testing
or contact your client director for more information.

To arrange testing email
CovidTesting.enquiries@nuffieldhealth.com.

Disclaimer: Research and development of COVID-19 testing is ongoing. As such our approach may be updated as testing evolves. We will continue to observe the guidance from Public Health England and the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency on any new tests and kits that become available before making these available to the public.

