



Fact Sheet for Antigen Tests



COVID-19

What is an Antigen Test?

An antigen test directly detects fragments of proteins from the COVID-19 virus. Antigen tests have been approved by the FDA to be used to test people with symptoms (symptomatic individuals)

Why Use Antigen Tests?

- Easy to perform almost anywhere with a non-invasive nose swab
- Provide results quickly
- Lower cost
- Good at confirming suspected COVID infections in people who are already sick

When Should Antigen Tests be Used?

- You should use an antigen test when:
 - You need to determine if someone who appears sick has COVID-19 quickly
 - E.g. Rapid triage in Emergency Rooms or pre-hospital admission testing is recommended
 - You are in an area where access to polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing is limited
 - E.g. Rural hospitals, tribal areas, and other remote settings with limited access
- If there is limited PCR testing capacity and you are in a high-risk setting where regular, frequent testing is recommended, such as:
 - Congregate setting (prisons, nursing homes, etc.) for staff or residents with symptoms or for routine testing to find cases
- If you don't meet these criteria, please see the fact sheet "Testing for COVID-19: PCR, Antigen, and Serology" for additional information about when to use PCR or Serology instead

Concerns With Antigen Tests

- Only approved for people currently experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- More likely to have a "false negative" result. Thus, a negative antigen test result may need a follow-up PCR test in people who have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Positive tests in asymptomatic people who have not been exposed may be "false positives" and need a follow-up PCR test for confirmation.

FDA-Approved Antigen Tests

- Quidel Sofia SARS Antigen FIA assay
 - Accuracy best within 5 days from start of symptoms
- BD Veritor System for Rapid Detection of SARS-CoV-2
 - Accuracy best within 5 days from start of symptoms
- LumiraDx SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Test
 - Accuracy best within 12 days from start of symptoms
- Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 Ag CARD
 - Accuracy best within 7 days from start of symptoms

