



Asymptomatic Testing

Fact Sheet

Why would I get tested without symptoms?

Some people are worried they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and would like to confirm they do not currently have it. Others worry about high-risk family members at home and want to ensure they are not carrying COVID-19 and potentially passing it on.

What do I need in order to get tested?

No one will be turned away; however, you should bring your Ontario health card. Having your health card number recorded will ensure you are able to look up your results online.

Do I need to self-isolate if I got tested at a clinic?

Not unless you are a close contact of a known or suspected case, or are at higher risk of severe disease, like those who are 70 years of age or older.

What does the test involve?

The person doing the test will explain it before it is done. It will involve inserting a swab into one or both of your nostrils.

Can the test determine if I had COVID-19 in the past (but not now)?

No. This is not an antibody/serology test. **This swab test only determines if you have COVID-19 at the time the test is collected.** Currently, antibody/serology tests that can detect previous exposure to COVID-19 are not available in Ontario.

How often should I be tested for COVID-19?

You may choose to be tested more often if you are concerned you have been exposed to COVID-19 through your workplace, especially where physical distancing is a challenge or if you work with people who are vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19. This includes workers in health care settings, essential workers who work closely with the public (e.g. grocery stores, restaurants, other retail settings, childcare, factory/line work, shelters, other congregate living workplaces, etc.). You should also seek testing if you develop symptoms of COVID-19.

What does it mean if I get a negative test?

If you test negative for COVID-19, you did not have detectable virus at the time your sample was collected. It does not mean that you will not be exposed to, test positive for or become sick with COVID-19 at any time after your test. You should continue to practice physical distancing and keep monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested again if they develop. **If you test negative WITH NO SYMPTOMS, you CAN continue your usual activities, including work, and should follow routine precautions including wearing a cloth mask in public when physical distancing is not possible, and cleaning your hands often.**

Can the test be a false-negative?

If you are still incubating the virus but don't yet have symptoms, it may be too early for the swab to pick up virus for the test to detect. If you are a close contact of a case, you will be asked to continue to self-isolate and self-monitor so that if symptoms develop, you can be tested again, when there is less of a chance that the test will be falsely negative.

What does it mean if I get a positive test?

When there is virus in the sample, the test is very effective at picking it up. The significance of a positive test if you have never had symptoms is still unknown. Since you have had no symptoms and if you have been wearing a face covering/cloth mask and following physical distancing guidance, the likelihood of passing the virus to others is very low. Peterborough Public Health will follow up with you to complete contact tracing going back 48 hours before the time of your test. You must self-isolate from family and others for 14 days after your test, and your workplace may have additional protocols you need to follow. This may change as new provincial guidelines are released.

How likely is it that the test is falsely positive?

It is unlikely, but not impossible. Peterborough Public Health (PPH) can check with the lab that processed the test for more information that can help determine whether or not the test result is accurate. Sometimes, it may be necessary to have a second test just to be sure, but PPH will let you know if that's recommended.

How and when will I get my results?

Test results will be available in 2-4 days from the time of collection, but may take longer. You will **ONLY** receive a phone call from Peterborough Public Health if you test positive. You can also check your lab results online by visiting <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>.

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19:

You should not attend the drive-through testing site and instead, book an appointment at the PRHC Assessment Centre by calling 705-876-5086. If you have severe symptoms, call 911 or go to the Emergency Department (ED).

For questions or more information, call **705-743-1000**
or visit peterboroughpublichealth.ca/covid19