

# Antibody Testing Frequently Asked Questions

## **WHAT IS AN ANTIBODY TEST?**

The antibody test is an indicator of an individual's exposure to COVID-19, but is not an indicator of immunity to it. When truly positive, the test indicates it is likely you had COVID-19, even if you did not show symptoms. A truly negative test means it is unlikely you have had the COVID-19 infection. However, false positives and false negatives can occur.

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DIAGNOSTIC TEST AND AN ANTIBODY TEST?**

**Diagnostic test** (nasal swab test) looks for the presence of the actual virus. This test detects if an individual has an active case. **Antibody test** (blood test) is not designed for the diagnosis of acute infection. This test is designed to detect antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The test may be an indicator that an individual has been exposed to COVID-19. However, more experience is needed with the test to know whether it is specific for SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, and is not picking up past exposure to other types of coronaviruses. It should not be used as proof of immunity to COVID-19. Experts also do not yet know if having SARS-CoV-2 antibody actually protects from re-exposure to COVID-19.

## **HOW DO I GET MY TEST RESULTS?**

A test result notification letter will be sent to you by mail approximately 5-7 business days after your donation. If you have not received a letter after seven days, please contact us at 325-670-2799. Results will be given over the phone on a case-by-case basis.

## **WHAT IF I RECEIVE A POSITIVE ANTIBODY TEST RESULT?**

If you had past symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 or have been exposed to a person(s) with COVID-19, then a positive test result suggests you may have been infected. If you were not sick or do not know if you were exposed, it is more difficult to know what the positive test result means. **Either way, you need to continue to practice caution in the community and protect yourself and others from possible exposure.**

## **IF I TEST POSITIVE FOR ANTIBODIES TO COVID-19, DOES THAT MEAN I COULD STILL BE CONTAGIOUS AND BE HARMFUL TO OTHERS?**

Currently, all indications are that antibody means recovery after infection. We have no reason to believe someone would be infectious while having antibodies. The evidence supports a very small window of infectiousness, starting a couple of days before symptoms and not lasting long after fever is gone.

## **IF MY BLOOD TESTS POSITIVE, WILL MY PLASMA BE GIVEN TO A CURRENT COVID-19 PATIENT?**

If you receive a positive antibody test, the blood used during that donation will not be given to a current COVID-19 patient. However, Hendrick Regional Blood Center may contact you to explore your eligibility for donating convalescent plasma when you are eligible to donate again.

## **WHAT IF I RECEIVE A NEGATIVE ANTIBODY TEST RESULT?**

If you have felt well and have not been around anyone that has been diagnosed with COVID-19, then a negative test most likely means you have not been infected. However, there are many reasons a false negative test result could occur, including the fact that this is an investigational test (e.g. newly developed and not U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved).

## **DO I HAVE TO DONATE BLOOD TO RECEIVE THE COVID-19 ANTIBODY TEST?**

Yes. At this time, Hendrick Regional Blood Center is only offering complimentary antibody tests to donors who successfully donate.

## **CAN YOU TEST MY BLOOD DONATION FOR ACTIVE COVID-19 INFECTION?**

No. This test is not a COVID-19 diagnostic test (nasal swab test). Please do not donate blood if you are sick or think you were recently exposed. If you believe you could have COVID-19 or another illness, please contact your healthcare provider. Donors are required to feel well and healthy at the time of donation.

## **CAN COVID-19 BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH BLOOD?**

No. At this time, scientific evidence has not indicated any risk of transmission of any coronavirus through blood transfusion. COVID-19 is a virus that is spread through respiratory droplets and not through donated blood. As per FDA-requirements, all blood is tested for viruses that can potentially be spread through blood transfusion only.

## **IF I GAVE BLOOD BEFORE THE ANTIBODY TESTING BEGAN, WILL MY BLOOD BE TESTED?**

No. If you donated prior to July 20, 2020, your blood will not be tested for antibodies. If you are interested in receiving the antibody test, please donate when you are eligible.

### **WHAT IF I DON'T WANT THE ANTIBODY TEST?**

Beginning Monday, July 20, 2020, all blood that is collected at our Blood Center or at one of our blood drives will be tested for coronavirus antibodies.

### **WILL MY TEST RESULTS BE SHARED WITH ANYONE ELSE BESIDES ME?**

If required by law, test results may be shared with the county and state health authorities.

### **WHAT ANTIBODY TEST IS HENDRICK REGIONAL BLOOD CENTER USING?**

Hendrick Regional Blood Center is using the Abbott SARS-CoV-2 IgG test. According to Abbott, this test is intended for the detection of IgG antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 in serum and plasma.

### **IS THE ANTIBODY TEST APPROVED BY THE U.S. FEDERAL DRUG ADMINISTRATION? (FDA)**

Currently, there are no FDA-approved tests for antibodies to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Because there is considerable interest in testing, the FDA has granted its use under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) during this pandemic. The test is intended to detect antibodies to the virus causing COVID-19. (Note: This test has not been reviewed by the FDA.)

### **WILL I RECEIVE THE TESTING IF I DONATE AT A MOBILE BLOOD DRIVE?**

Yes. All donations collected at our Blood Center or bloodmobiles will be tested for the antibody. Results will be mailed to donors.

## **DONOR ELIGIBILITY AND DONATION PROCESS**

### **Donor Eligibility**

- Donor must be at least 17 years of age. (Age 16 may donate with written parental consent.) There is no upper age limit.
- Donor must weigh at least 120 pounds.
- Donor must present photo identification.
- Donor must wear a face mask. If you do not have one when you arrive to donate, one will be provided to you.
- Donor should be well hydrated and eat a good meal prior to donating.

### **Donation Process**

#### **Before:**

1. Donors will be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 at the Blood Center entrance or prior to the interview process on our mobile blood drives.
2. Donors will fill out necessary paperwork to begin process.
3. Vitals will be taken, including pulse, blood pressure, iron levels and temperature. (Hendrick Regional Blood Center requirements are different from the COVID-19 screening area requirements.)
4. If vitals are within the guidelines, a donor history questionnaire will be given.
5. If deemed eligible, donor will be taken from the interview room to a donor chair for donation.

#### **During:**

1. A technician will begin the donation process and monitor donor throughout.
2. A drink and snack will be provided, if requested.
3. When donation is complete, donor's arm will be wrapped.
4. Discharge care instructions will be given.

#### **After:**

1. Donors should not rush to get out of the chair.
2. Donors should not work out or participate in strenuous activities 12-24 hours after donation.
3. Donation process times vary. Average times include:
  - a. Whole blood - 30-45 minutes
  - b. ALYX - 45-60 minutes
  - c. Platelets - 90-120 minutes

Whole blood donors are eligible to donate every eight weeks. ALYX donors can donate every 16 weeks, and platelet donors can donate every two weeks.



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