

COVID-19 At-home Testing

COVID-19 at-home testing (also called self-testing) allows some or all parts of the testing process to happen at home. Some at-home tests have you collect a nasal or saliva sample and send it to a lab. Others allow you to test the sample yourself, with results in minutes.

At-home test results may not be accepted for some purposes, such as employer or travel testing requirements, or if you later need to provide proof of prior COVID-19 infection.

Tips for Performing an At-home Test

- Read the instructions carefully and view any step-by-step videos from the test makers **before** beginning the test.
- Closely follow the instructions. If samples are not collected, handled or stored exactly as written in the instructions, your test result may be incorrect.
- Before and after testing, wash your hands with soap and water, and disinfect the table or other surface where you are performing the test.
- Do not use expired tests, or test components that are damaged or discolored.
- Read the test result within the amount of time written in the test kit instructions. A result read before or after the written timeframe may be incorrect.
- Do not reuse test kits or components.

At-home testing may be less accurate than tests performed by a health care provider. For this reason, there are times when you should go to a provider for a test to confirm the results.

Additional Resources

- For information about COVID-19 treatment, visit [nyc.gov/health/covidtreatments](https://www.nyc.gov/health/covidtreatments). Treatment works best the sooner you start, so call your provider right away if you test positive.
- For information on quarantine and isolation, including precautions you should take, visit [on.nyc.gov/quarantine-isolation](https://www.nyc.gov/quarantine-isolation).
- For resources to help you isolate or quarantine in a free hotel room or at home, call 212-COVID19 (212-268-4319) or visit www.nychealthandhospitals.org/take-care.
- To find a testing site, many of which are no cost, visit [nyc.gov/covidtest](https://www.nyc.gov/covidtest).
- Visit [nyc.gov/health/testingtips](https://www.nyc.gov/health/testingtips) or scan this QR code for links to videos with instructions on performing at-home tests.



At-home Test Result		What To Do
You test positive .		Stay home (isolate) for at least five full days. Wear a face mask around others and take other precautions for 10 days. ¹ Discuss with your health care provider. Inform close contacts so they can quarantine, if necessary, and get tested. ²
You test negative .	You have COVID-19 symptoms. ³	Isolate. Get a test from a provider to confirm your result or take a second at-home test at least 24 hours after your first at-home test. If your second test is negative, you can end isolation if you have not had a fever for the last 24 hours without taking medicine, unless you are required to quarantine due to recent close contact to someone with COVID-19.
	You recently had close contact to someone with COVID-19 and do not have symptoms.	If you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines ⁴ or if you recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days, ⁵ you do not need to stay home (quarantine). All others must quarantine for at least five days. ⁶ Everyone (even if not in quarantine) should wear a mask and take other precautions for 10 days following the close contact. Some people can attend work or school while in quarantine. ⁷
	You have no symptoms and had no close contact.	You do not need to do anything else.
You have an invalid result or testing error.		Follow the test kit instructions. Seek another test if you have symptoms or were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

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¹ You can end isolation after five full days (where Day 1 is the day **after** symptoms begin, or if no symptoms, the day **after** your COVID-19 test) if you have no symptoms or symptoms are improving and you have not had a fever for the last 24 hours without taking medicine. People unable to wear a well-fitting mask must isolate for 10 days. People with weakened immune systems may need to isolate for longer than five days. Some settings, such as nursing homes, may have longer isolation requirements, and your employer may have different requirements for returning to work.

² Close contacts are people who have been within 6 feet of you for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period while you have COVID-19. This can be from two days before your symptoms began (or if you had no symptoms, two days before your positive test) to the time you started isolation. If you were at work during this time, tell your employer. If your child tests positive and was in school during this time, tell their school.

³ Symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

⁴ Up to date means you are fully vaccinated (received both doses of a two-dose vaccine or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine) and have received additional doses and boosters if eligible.

⁵ This applies to anyone who had confirmed COVID-19 (meaning they had a positive viral test) in the past 90 days and recovered.

⁶ You can end quarantine after five days (where Day 1 is the day **after** your last exposure) if you are able to wear a well-fitting mask around others at all times. Otherwise, quarantine for 10 days. Some settings, such as nursing homes, may have different quarantine requirements.

⁷ If your child was identified as a close contact at school and their school lets students stay in school after exposure, your child can take two at-home tests over seven days (ideally two and five days after exposure) or as advised by their school. If your child was exposed outside of school and is fully vaccinated, they also may be allowed to attend school while in quarantine. Contact the school for more information.