

Top 7 Questions: COVID-19 Testing

1. What can I expect when having a COVID-19 test? It's easy!

Samples are collected by a cotton-tipped anterior nasal swab. The swab is inserted less than half an inch into a nostril and rotated for 10-15 seconds, this is then repeated on the other side. According to the Mass DPH and the CDC, a "nasal swab is similar to nasopharyngeal swab in detecting coronavirus."

2. How long do I need to wait for a test result to come back? Expect 3-4 days.

Samples are sent to a lab for processing, results are provided to your healthcare provider's office. Acton Medical will contact patients with test results, typically within three days of the test being administered. Timeframes may vary depending on the number of tests being done that day.

3. What should I do while waiting for test results? It depends.

If tested due to **COVID-19 symptoms or exposure, quarantine and wait for results.** [Click here](#) to learn more from the Department of Public Health. Patients **tested to accommodate travel** to a state requiring a negative test **AND without symptoms**, practice social distancing, mask use, and good hand hygiene. If returning to Mass. from a high risk state, quarantine until receiving a negative test, as defined by the [MA State Travel order](#).

4. What does it mean if I have a negative test result? It's reassuring, but no guarantee.

A negative result means the virus that causes COVID-19 wasn't found in your sample. It is possible to have an incorrect negative result even if you do have COVID-19, it's known as a "false negative test." False negatives occur in 20-30% of people with COVID-19.

If a sample is tested too early during infection, a negative result is possible. Exposure may have occurred after the test. **Patients tested due to exposure and not exhibiting symptoms** may be asked to quarantine depending on exposure type. Contact your healthcare provider if new symptoms occur, another test or further evaluation may be needed. Seclusion may be advised even with a negative test, if symptoms match COVID-19 or there's documented contact with the virus.

5. Can a person spread the infection if they don't feel sick? Yes.

The virus has been found in people who feel well and have no symptoms. Social distancing, limiting gatherings, regular hand washing, and wearing a mask are important ways to reduce the spread.

6. If someone has already had COVID-19, can they get it again? We don't really know.

There is no scientific evidence showing that the body can develop long-term immunity. Even if you've recovered from COVID-19, continue to maintain social distancing, follow good hand hygiene, and wear a mask in public.

7. Does insurance cover the cost of a COVID-19 test? Usually, but it depends.

Insurance coverage has changed rapidly since March, 2020. Check with your insurance provider about coverage and possible out-of-pocket expense, they may need to know that [Acton Medical tests are performed at Emerson Hospital](#).

Acton Medical Associates is dedicated to the safety and good health of our patients, team members, and the community. It's our promise to keep safety at the forefront of everything we do so that all of our patients receive the highest quality care in a clean and comfortable environment.

We partner closely with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to ensure the strictest of safety guideline are met in all of our locations.