



What COVID-19 test should I do?

When should I get a COVID-19 test?

1. **You have COVID-19 symptoms.** It is especially important if you are at higher risk of severe illness to get a test so you can access treatment earlier.
2. **You are at higher risk of severe illness and have been recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.** Early diagnosis means you can access treatment earlier.
3. **You are a household contact or have had a high or moderate risk exposure to someone with COVID-19.** This will help you know if you have COVID-19 sooner.

You do not need to test or self-isolate if you have had COVID-19 and been released from self-isolation in the last 12 weeks. If you are at higher risk of severe illness and your diagnosis was not confirmed by a PCR test, you should get a PCR test if you get symptoms.

See [information for people exposed to COVID-19](#) for more information about when to get tested.

Who is at higher risk of severe illness?

- People aged 60 years and older
- Pregnant women
- Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Islander people (from age 35 years and over)
- People with obesity, diabetes, serious cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease, severe chronic liver or kidney disease, active cancer or who are immunocompromised
- Some people with a disability including those with a disability that affects their lungs, heart or immune system
- Residents of aged care and disability care facilities
- People aged 18 years and older who are unvaccinated

What COVID-19 test should I get?

There are **two different tests** you can get to check if you have COVID-19:

- a rapid antigen test (**RAT**) that you can do yourself
- a **PCR** test that is done at a testing clinic

If you are at higher risk of severe illness you should get a **PCR test** as they are more accurate. There are **treatments** available that can only be prescribed in the early stages of the disease. If you can't get a PCR test result quickly, do a rapid antigen test (if you have one) while you wait for the PCR test result.

If you are not at higher risk of severe illness, do a rapid antigen test unless your doctor tells you to have a PCR test.

Specific testing advice is available for residents of aged care facilities. Speak to your residential aged care provider if you have questions or see the [Protocol for RAT and PCR testing in residential aged care](#).

What do I do with the results?

PCR tests

- If you have a **positive PCR** test result, even if you don't have symptoms, you have COVID-19. You must follow the advice for people [testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home](#).
- If you have a **negative PCR** test result you do not currently have COVID-19. If you have been recently exposed to a person with COVID-19, you need to continue to follow the self-isolation advice for [people exposed to COVID-19](#) as you may still be developing the infection.

Rapid antigen tests

If you have COVID-19 symptoms and:

- the rapid antigen test is **positive**, [register the result with Service NSW](#) and follow the advice for people [testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home](#).
- the rapid antigen test is **negative** and you are at higher risk of severe illness, keep self-isolating until you get your PCR test result, as this will be the more accurate result.
- the rapid antigen test is **negative**, and you are not at higher risk of severe illness, have a PCR test right away or another rapid antigen test 24 hours later. Keep self-isolating until you get the results of your second test. If the second test is negative you do not have COVID-19. You should stay at home until you recover from your illness.

If you have no COVID-19 symptoms and:

- the rapid antigen test is **positive** [register the result with Service NSW](#) and follow the [testing positive advice](#). You can have a **PCR test** to confirm the result (as it is more accurate). If you do get a PCR test within 24 hours of your rapid antigen test and it is negative, you can stop self-isolating. Get another test if you develop symptoms.
- the rapid antigen test is **negative** you are unlikely to have COVID-19. If you are at **higher risk of severe illness** and have been recently exposed to COVID-19 in your household, you should have a **PCR test** right away. If the PCR test is **negative**, you must continue to isolate for 7 days, get another test at Day 6 and if you develop symptoms.