

# Considerations for the general public seeking SARS-CoV-2 PCR diagnostic testing

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This is the second article of a two-part series on considerations for SARS-CoV-2 PCR diagnostic testing. Read the previous articles from the series Considerations for SARS-CoV-2 PCR diagnostic testing.

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has been fraught with challenges since the current pandemic reached the United States. Learn more about the considerations for the general public on seeking PCR diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2.

## Download the Considerations for the General Public Seeking SARS-CoV-2 PCR Diagnostic Testing

### **1** Considerations for the General Public Seeking SARS-CoV-2 PCR Diagnostic Testing (PDF)

Download the complete overview of the considerations for the general public seeking PCR diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2.

## Considerations for the general public

The AMA encourages the general public to help be good stewards of limited testing resources and help reduce wait times for results. Individuals should seek testing for SARS-CoV-2 when they have a medical need for that test, meaning that they are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19, they have a

known exposure to COVID-19, they need a test before seeing a physician or getting a procedure or they are a health care professional that may have had exposure or risks exposing others.

Those that do not have a medical need for a test should consider alternatives to limit virus transmission, such as quarantining at home, rather than seeking testing services. Non-medical needs for a test includes seeking testing before traveling for non-essential purposes, participating in social gatherings, participating in large gatherings and returning to work and school, among others. In many of these instances, quarantining at home per CDC recommendations prior to engaging in these behaviors would ensure you do not transmit the virus to others.

After you are tested, it is critical that you quarantine at home until you receive your test results. Engaging with friends, family or the general public during the time between getting your test and receiving your results carries the risk of exposure to these individuals.

Individuals should also be aware that a negative SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test means only that you were SARS-CoV-2 negative at the time your test was taken or were tested too early during the course of illness. It is possible that you could become infected in the immediate hours or days following your test. It is critical that you continue to follow all public health guidelines and protocols to limit the spread of COVID-19, even if you have a negative SARS-CoV-2 test result. These include practicing physical distance, employing good hand hygiene and wearing face coverings in public and/or when physical distancing is not possible.

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- Considerations for SARS-CoV-2 PCR diagnostic testing overview

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