
What is SARS-CoV-2?

SARS-CoV-2 stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus Type 2, which is the name of the virus causing the current COVID-19 public health emergency.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. Other symptoms have been reported including chills, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, runny nose, fatigue, wheezing, and new loss of taste or smell. Some people with COVID-19 develop symptoms and some do not. Both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals can transmit COVID-19 to others. Talk to your health care provider if you have any of these symptoms.

How do I know if I am infected with SARS-CoV-2?

Diagnostic tests detect SARS-CoV-2 in samples collected from your nose or throat. A diagnostic test is the only way to know if you are infected with SARS-CoV-2. These tests can be performed for those with or without symptoms.

How does the SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test work?

The test uses a technique called Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) to determine if genetic material from the virus is present in the sample collected. If there is no SARS-CoV-2 virus present in the sample, then no genetic material will be detected.

My report says I have a positive result. What does that mean?

This means you have SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). You should consult with your health care provider, who will monitor your symptoms and provide guidance about how your illness should be managed. It is important to understand that, if you are infected with SARS-CoV-2, you may transmit the virus to others. You should follow NYSDOH guidance about isolation and physical distancing.

My report says I have a negative result. What does that mean?

A negative test result means that SARS-CoV-2 was not detected in your sample. However, a negative result does not guarantee that you are not infected. If you continue to feel unwell or develop symptoms resembling those of COVID-19, you should isolate yourself and ask your health care provider if you should be tested again. If you had close contact with someone known to have COVID-19, you should remain in quarantine for 14 days after exposure, even if you had a negative test result.

My report says I have an inconclusive or indeterminate result. What does that mean?

This means that the test was not able to determine whether SARS-CoV-2 was or was not present. Talk to your health care provider, as they may decide you should be tested again.