COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When to be tested, and what to do next:

When should I be tested for COVID-19?

- You have symptoms compatible with the disease: shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, cough, congestion, fever, body aches, or other flu-like symptoms.

- You have had a known exposure to an individual with COVID-19. This means you were closer than 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer. In this situation you should be tested 3-6 days after exposure. This is due to a near 100% negative rate in the first 2 to 3 days after exposure due to the incubation time of the virus. It is not impossible to get infected from a greater distance than 6 feet - or from being within 6 feet for shorter than 15 minutes - but it is less likely, and usually does not warrant testing.

What is an exposure?

- A known exposure is being closer than 6 feet for more than 15 cumulative minutes of an individual who has tested positive (they have) COVID-19, not someone who has been exposed to Covid-19 that is a secondary exposure.

I have not had an exposure and I do not have symptoms. Should I get tested?

- No. If you have no known exposure and no symptoms, it is **not recommended** that you be tested for COVID-19.

What do I do if I've had a known exposure & do not have any symptoms?

- An individual who has a direct exposure must quarantine for 10 days without any additional testing or quarantine for 7 days and then be tested for Covid-19. If negative they may return to normal activities

I want to know if I have been exposed to COVID-19. Should I get tested?

- A COVID test cannot tell you if you have been exposed to the virus, OR if you will become ill, OR if you have had the virus in the past. It can only state that no viral particles were detected at the current time in the current sample taken. No test is completely accurate in detecting disease and false negative test do and will happen.

I've tested positive for COVID-19. What now?

- A person with minimal symptoms - or mild symptoms - usually does not need medications. This can be discussed with a healthcare provider on case by case basis. These individuals need to self-isolate to avoid contact with others, and to avoid potential spread of the disease. The individuals should also make close contacts aware of the infection so that those exposed can self-isolate, watch for symptoms, and if necessary be tested themselves.

- In patients with more severe symptoms, or low oxygen levels, hospitalization might become necessary. All individuals with a positive test should remain in self-isolation for a minimum of 10 days from the day their symptoms started. They also need to be fever-free for 1 to 3 days and symptoms must be improving.

I had a test and it was positive. It has been 10 days since my symptoms started, and it has been several days since I have had a fever and my symptoms are improving. Should I get retested?

- No. It is **not recommended** to retest for COVID. This is due to high rate of false positive tests caused by inactive viral particles often found in samples, and the lack of evidence that these individuals are contagious.

I tested positive but have had little to no symptoms, or I have no symptoms today. Can I go back to school or work now, even though it has not been 10 days?

- No. It is recommended that anyone with a positive test remain self-isolated for 10 days even if feeling better on day 3 of their infection.

I wasn't exposed and I've tested negative, what now?

- A negative test in a patient with symptoms suggest the illness is not from COVID-19 but instead a viral or bacterial infection of another type or possibly even allergies that might resemble a COVID-19 infection.

- Although there is a chance of a false negative, it is reasonable in these situations for the person to return to work or school knowing COVID-19 infection is not likely. Individuals with symptoms extremely suggestive of COVID-19 should continue to isolate and consider retesting at a later date to avoid infection of others due to the possibility of false negative testing.

How long is my negative test good for?

- A negative COVID-19 test cannot predict the future. If an individual tests negative on Tuesday, but develops symptoms on Thursday, the negative test 2 days prior does not mean that the patient does not have COVID-19 on Thursday. It simply means that person did not have virus detected in the sample taken 2 days prior. This person would need to be retested or self-isolate for 10 days.