# COVID-19 Self-Testing Fast Facts

COVID-19 self-tests, also referred to as home tests or over-the-counter (OTC) tests, are one of many risk-reduction measures along with vaccination, masking, and physical distancing, that protect you and others by reducing the chances of spreading SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19
Self-test kit

Self-tests can be taken at home or anywhere, are easy to use, and produce rapid results.

You can use self-tests, regardless of vaccination status, if you have had a potential exposure. Self-tests are most reliable when you have symptoms.
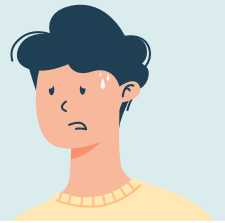
Follow all of the manufacturer's instructions for performing the test.

Consider using a self-test immediately before indoor gatherings, if you develop symptoms, or if you feel you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 (testing 5 days after exposure is best).

Stay Home!

A positive self-test result means that the test detected the virus and you are very likely infected.

You do not need to get a PCR test to confirm this result unless advised by your health care provider or public health personnel.

You should:

1. **NOTIFY** others you have been around.
2. **ISOLATE** at home for a minimum of 5 days.

After 5 days, if you are feeling better or never had symptoms, and you have been fever free for 24 hours, you may stop isolating. Continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days after symptoms began or you tested positive. If you are unable or unwilling to wear a mask, isolate at home for the full 10 days.

If you have access to self-tests, consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, you may remove your mask sooner than day 10.

24 hrs

A negative self-test result means that the test did not detect the virus and you may not have an infection, but it does not rule out infection. Consider repeating the test in 24–48 hours, especially if you have symptoms or feel you were exposed. It is safest to wear a mask around others while you have symptoms, even if you test negative. If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days, even if you test negative.

2-1-1

Call 2-1-1 if you have questions about interpreting test results, isolation guidance or notifying your contacts.