



COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE COVID-19

Can anyone who think they have COVID-19 be tested?

No. The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) have strict criteria for who can be tested. These are updated regularly. If you think you have COVID-19 you should contact your healthcare provider. They will be able to tell you if you should be tested or not.

Why should I not be tested for COVID-19 if I am concerned, but do not have symptoms?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and difficulty breathing. There are a number of reasons why we do not recommend testing of a person with no symptoms, even if you are a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, or have recently travelled to a country where COVID-19 is circulating in the community:

1. A negative test result in a person with no symptoms does not mean that you do not have COVID-19. You could still be in the early stage of COVID-19 and develop symptoms later. Therefore, testing when you do not have symptoms could give a false-negative result.
2. Even if your laboratory test result was negative, you would still need to stay at home in quarantine for 14 days if you travelled to a region with high transmission or had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19.
3. If you tested negative and mistakenly interpreted this to mean that you were not infected, you could go back to your usual activities and spread the virus while you still had an early infection.
4. There is a shortage of laboratory tests globally, and we need to reserve our valuable laboratory testing resources for those who are sick and for those groups of people where we can use these test results for public health good.

How do I get tested?

The exact testing process may be different in different provinces and between the public and private sectors. In general, you need to first contact your healthcare provider. This may be your GP or your local clinic/hospital. You should phone ahead to your healthcare provider, if possible, and find out what the exact process is for you to be tested. If you cannot get hold of your healthcare provider, you can try to call your nearest testing laboratory for information. If you have internet access, you can look for specific information on these testing laboratory websites. If you do not need emergency medical care, you should not visit a hospital emergency unit for testing. Some hospitals or GPs may refer you to an off-site testing facility. The National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS) and some private laboratories offer testing at mobile facilities. You will need to pay for tests done at private laboratories.

What specimens will be collected from me and what do the test results mean?

The most common way to collect a sample for COVID-19 testing is by using a swab and collecting a sample from the back of your nose or mouth. If you have a wet cough, you may be asked to produce a sputum sample into a jar for testing. This will be sent to a laboratory. The laboratory will test your sample for COVID-19. The test will be positive or negative. If your test is positive, this means parts of the COVID-19 virus was found in your sample and you have confirmed COVID-19. If your test is negative, this may not necessarily exclude COVID-19 for a number of reasons. You should therefore complete your period of home quarantine as you

have potentially been exposed to the infection, and you should only have a repeat test if this is advised by your healthcare provider, for example if your symptoms get worse.

How long will it take to get my test result?

The turn-around time for testing specimens varies from laboratory to laboratory. In general, you should expect to receive your results within a few days.

Who will the test result be sent to?

Your test results will be sent to your healthcare provider. If you have agreed to be contacted directly with your test results, your test result may be sent directly to you.

What should I do while I wait for my test results?

While you wait for your results, you are advised to self-quarantine at home.

Source:

NICD website:

<https://www.nicd.ac.za/what-to-do-if-i-think-i-have-covid-19/>

Call the COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999

Send “hi” on WhatsApp to COVID-19 Connect: 060 012 3456

Visit the website www.sacoronavirus.co.za