



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

At-Home Testing for COVID-19 – Important Things to Know

Sterling, Colo. – September 2, 2021: If you find yourself needing to be tested for COVID-19 but unable to get in to see a healthcare provider, don't have time to visit a community testing site, or need the results immediately there is another option. Several at-home tests, [approved by the Federal Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#), are making testing convenient and simple. At-home tests can be attained by prescription or over-the-counter at pharmacies, retail stores and online. There are two types of at-home testing kits available so be sure to read the packaging:

- **Home collection test:** Samples are collected at home and sent to a lab for analysis. Results are typically received within a few days.
- **Self-test:** Samples are collected at home and you perform the test. While not as accurate as the home collection test, you get results in a few minutes.

According to the CDC, at-home tests can be used by anyone who is symptomatic, regardless of their vaccination status, and by people who are asymptomatic, especially if potentially exposed to someone with COVID-19. Keep in mind, presently these self-tests are used for the detection of current infection and can be less accurate than those done

by professionals depending on when and how the tests are conducted. Because these tests require higher amounts of virus in a sample, you could unknowingly test too early leading to an inaccurate result. If you are unsure of your results, taking a second test a few days later or being tested by a provider is recommended. It's also important to read the manufacturer's instructions before using the test and completely follow the directions. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about the test or your results.

Got the Result, Now What?

If the test is negative, you probably were not infected at the time your sample was collected. The test result only means that you did not have COVID-19 at the time of testing. Continue to monitor for symptoms and take another test if you become sick.

If the test result is positive, it is very important to understand what to do next:

- 1) A positive result requires you to isolate for 10 days beginning from the first day you started having symptoms. If asymptomatic, begin isolating from the day you tested positive. Isolation means to separate yourself from all others, including family members. Stay in a specific "sick room" or area, and use a separate bathroom (if available). When the 10 days are up, you must have no fever for at least 24 hours and other symptoms need to be improving.
- 2) To monitor the progression of illness, stay in communication with a healthcare provider and contact Northeast Colorado Health Department (NCHD). We track incident rates which is critically important to protecting our community. In order to do this, accurate data and information needs to be collected for our region, so it is important that we record all testing, including at-home results.
- 3) It is common for people to be contagious for around 2 days prior to symptoms starting. Identifying who you were in contact with during that period and notifying

them is important in stopping the spread and alerting those who are at higher risk of getting severely sick. Did you work during that time? Go to school? Were you around friends or family? Did you attend any community events or gatherings? Informing your employer, close contacts and school, ensures that our businesses, community members, and schools can make the best decisions and depending on their vaccination status, the following is required for household members and close contacts:

Household Members

- Vaccinated - Do not need to quarantine. Monitor for symptoms. Get tested around day 5-7 to ensure not positive and asymptomatic.
- Unvaccinated - Need to quarantine for 14-days from the last date of close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more—this is cumulative over the course of the day) with the person who tested positive. If the sick person can isolate in their own space (bedroom, basement, etc.), away from everyone, the unvaccinated household member can start the 14-day quarantine the day after their last contact with the sick person. If the sick person has to continue sharing living spaces (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.), then household members will need to have an extended 14-day quarantine that begins when the sick person's isolation date finishes. So those household members would need to be quarantined for a total of 24 days.

Close Contacts

- Vaccinated - Do not need to quarantine. Monitor for symptoms. Get tested around day 5-7 to ensure not positive and asymptomatic.
- Unvaccinated - Need to quarantine for 14-days from the last date they had close contact with the person who tested positive.

At-home tests can be found at most pharmacies, local retailers and online. Please give us a call if you have a positive test result. NCHD has a dedicated Covid-19 response team who can assist individuals, employers, and businesses with any questions regarding quarantine, isolation, testing or vaccination. To find free, ongoing testing sites in partnership with Northeast Colorado Health Department, visit our website at nchd.org/covid-testing.

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