



SARS-CoV-2 Antibody Test Question & Answer Sheet

You've decided to have the SARS-CoV-2 antibody test. These are some of the questions Star Valley Health (SVH) thinks you might have while you wait for your results as well as some of the questions you might have after receiving your results before you have a chance to talk to your health care provider.

SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19, what's the difference?

SARS-CoV-2 is the name of the virus that causes the illness known as COVID-19. If we get infected from the virus (SARS-CoV-2), we produce antibodies against the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

What exactly is an antibody?

If a person becomes infected with SARS-CoV-2, like anytime a person gets a new infection, that person will produce antibodies. Antibodies are how a person fights off infection. It is a body's natural immune response. Health care providers have been using blood tests that look for antibodies for decades to test if a person was ever infected by other types of infectious agents (e.g. Measles, Chickenpox, Hepatitis C, HIV, to name just a few).

Who is going to process my blood and do the actual test?

There are many companies that have started producing antibody blood tests for SARS-CoV-2. Star Valley Health has opted to process and ship your blood to a commercial lab called ARUP. ARUP is utilizing an FDA approved antibody test developed and produced by a company by the name of Abbott Laboratories. Abbott is a well-respected company that has been developing antibody tests for years. In the near future SVH will also be performing the same antibody test using the same Abbott equipment. Due to our size, however, we will be allowed a limited supply of these tests. SVH will likely continue to utilize ARUP as the main source of having this test completed for most of our patients.

When will I have my result reported back to me?

Star Valley Health anticipates most results will be reported back to our lab in 6 business days.

How will I get my results?

Anyone that gets an antibody test should have a telephone visit with their Primary Care Provider about the results. If you don't have a local Primary Care Provider, one of our Urgent Care Providers will be calling you to discuss the results.

Can I get a copy of my results?

Most certainly, we will discuss how to get a copy of the results when we call you.

Do I have to talk to a provider about my results?

No, but we encourage you to do so.

I know I was exposed to SARS-CoV-2 because I came in contact with someone who tested positive with the nose swab test. Why did my test come back negative?

Getting exposed to the virus doesn't mean that you actually get infected or ill from the virus. It takes several steps to get infected and produce an antibody from any virus including the virus known as SARS-CoV-2.

I had all the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, why did my test come back negative?

It likely means you had an infection with another type of virus that caused similar symptoms. During this pandemic, particularly in Star Valley, there have been at least 8-10 other viruses that cause respiratory symptoms "circulating" in the community. It's also possible the test is wrong. However, in this case our providers think it likely means you had another illness.

My test came back positive. Does this mean I'm immune to SARS-CoV-2 and I don't have to worry about getting sick and developing the illness COVID-19?

It is not possible to make that conclusion yet.

My test came back positive. Does this mean I don't have to wash my hands as much, do social distancing, and wear a mask when in public?

It is not known if you can get sick multiple times from SARS-CoV-2, neither is it known if you can pass that virus on to someone else even if you have produced an antibody to the virus.

How is this test different from the nose swab test and which is more accurate?

The nose swab test actually tests for the virus in your body. The nose swab test uses a process that detects some of the RNA (similar to DNA) of the virus. RNA testing is a very accurate way to test for the presence of the virus, but you have to be shedding enough virus and have had a good enough sample taken when your nose is swabbed for the test to be as accurate as possible. After a while (2 weeks after the onset of symptoms in most cases), a lot of people aren't shedding enough virus for this test to be useful. That's why the antibody test can help us understand who has had the virus in their body long enough to produce an antibody response.

