



COVID-19 Testing FAQ Rev. 5.22.20

**** WorkPartners does NOT accept walk-in patients for COVID-19 testing. ****

1. What is the difference between the tests available today?

Currently, there are 2 main types of tests available on the market.

PCR Test (Polymerase Chain Reaction)

- Also called diagnostic test, or molecular test, or “live virus” test
- **What does it test for?** The genes of the COVID virus
- **What can it tell you?** It can tell you if you are currently infected with the virus that can not only make you sick but can be transmitted to others.
- **What won't it tell you?** It will not tell you if you had the infection previously or if you are protected from getting it in the future.
- This test is currently the gold standard and the most often performed test to date.
- It can detect individuals who are infected, even when they have no symptoms.
- **How is it collected?** Most often a swab of the back of the nose (nasopharyngeal swab), or a throat swab.
- **What is the turnaround time on results?** Depending on the instrument, some tests can be resulted in 5 min, others in 24 hours.
- **How accurate is it?** While the numbers vary, when properly collected, using FDA approved instrumentation through certified labs experienced in performing molecular tests, the accuracy of PCR testing is thought to be approximately 85%.
- **Does WorkPartners offer this test?** Yes, but only after a telehealth screening visit to ensure we are performing the right test and to ensure that if anyone has symptoms or has possibly been exposed, they are directed to a separate entry and isolation room. This is for the protection of our staff and patients.

Antibody Test

- Also called serology test
- **What does it test for?** Proteins called Immunoglobulins (Ig) that protect you from infection called IgG (previous infection) and IgM (recent infection).
- Not used frequently at present but increasing
- **What does it tell you?** It tells you if you have recently, or previously, been infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus (the virus that causes COVID-19). Theoretically, this would mean that you are immune or protected from getting the infection.



Antibody Test (cont.)

- **What won't it tell you?** It cannot be reliably used to tell you if you currently have the virus because it often takes a week or longer to show up after you become infected.
- **How is it collected?** Traditionally through a blood draw sent to a clinical lab, but newer tests can be performed outside of a lab using blood from a simple fingerstick.
- **What is the turnaround time on results?** 10 minutes
- **How accurate is it?** The test itself is very accurate, with a specificity of 95% or higher. However, this is affected by how many people in the community have the infection. The lower the prevalence in the community, the more false-positive results (test says you have had the infection when you actually have not). Additionally, there are concerns as to the quality of some tests on the market.
- **What are the concerns about the test?** **1)** Poor quality tests on market make it difficult to know if the test is valid. **2)** It is still unclear if having antibodies really means that you are truly protected from getting the infection (immunity). **3)** It is still unclear how long the immunity would last.
- **Does WorkPartners offer this test?** Currently, we offer lab based whole blood tests, which are the only FDA-approved tests today. This will change rapidly and, once available, we will offer an FDA-approved fingerstick antibody test.

2. Isn't there another test coming out soon?

Yes, indeed. There is now a new Antigen test, which detects the virus's proteins.

- **What does it tell you?** Much like the PCR test, it can detect the presence of the virus and tell if someone is actively infected at the time.
- **What won't it tell you?** It will not tell you if you had the infection previously or if you are protected from getting it in the future.
- **How is it collected?** It is done through a swab of the front of the nose.
- **What is the turnaround time on results?** It can be done in 10 minutes in an office setting
- **How accurate is it?** Preliminary studies suggest it is not quite as sensitive as the PCR test, on the order of 80-85%. Therefore during periods when the virus is not as present such as before the onset of symptoms or at the end of an illness, it may not be as accurate as a PCR test.
- **Key Benefits:** These will likely be a good screening test and may play a role in workplace screening because results will be immediately available on site rather than sent to a lab to process, the test is less invasive or uncomfortable, and is less cost prohibitive.
- **Does WorkPartners offer this test?** We anticipate availability of this test at WorkPartners in the coming weeks.



3. **What type of test is offered at WorkPartners?**

Currently, we only offer the PCR testing through a fully CAP/CLIA licensed reference laboratory to ensure the highest negative predictive value of these tests. However, the future of an effective workplace safety, exposure, and mitigation strategy will lie in a logically crafted algorithm based on a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each diagnostic test. Inherent in this strategy is a careful vetting of the diagnostic reliability of each of these tests and their validation studies. We anticipate expanding our testing options to include both antibody and antigen testing in the coming month.

4. **What is the turnaround time on PCR test results?**

Currently, it is 24-48 hours but that may change depending on the demand for testing.

5. **What is the cost for the PCR testing?**

The cost is \$50 for a telehealth screening and covers the initial screening and a telehealth follow up visit to review and discuss results. The swab tests are \$150 each. This is billed directly to the employer. Should the test come back positive and it be determined to be work-related, we would ask for a claim number and treat the patient under Workers' Compensation.

6. **Why is the telehealth screening necessary?**

The telehealth visit allows us to:

- Obtain an accurate history and assess for industrial vs non-industrial causation (AOE/COE determination).
- Make appropriate, situation specific recommendations for or against testing.
- Place the required physician order for necessary test.
- Provide employee education, instruction, and restrictions.
- Prevents someone potentially infected from unexpectedly entering our facilities by scheduling them for testing in a private, separate entrance with our standardized infection control processes, which is important to ensuring the safety of our patients and staff.

**In certain situations, such as workplace exposures involving multiple asymptomatic employees, a single discussion between employer and our clinician may preclude the need for all employees with the same exposure from having to undergo a telehealth evaluation. In such scenarios, please contact Heather Manley at (760) 402-6278 to discuss the options.



7. What determines appropriateness of a test?

The telehealth component is critical in having an experienced physician provide situationally specific advice regarding the value of testing. In many cases, we are advising employers not to test. We do not want employers to incur costs that do not drive value. In many cases, symptomatic high-risk exposures do not preclude the need for a 14-day quarantine, and therefore, it is important for employers to fully understand the value of the testing. Also, a positive test has clear implications and recommendations that come with it. There is no testing paradigm that precludes the CDC recommended quarantine period of 14 days for high risk exposures.

8. Is testing available to symptomatic patients?

Yes. In order to initiate the process, the employer will need to submit a request for telehealth [HERE](#). From there, the patient will be screened. If appropriate, they will be scheduled for a test in one of our facilities. We do NOT accept walk-in patients for COVID-19 testing.

9. Can I test an employee who has no symptoms?

Yes. While these tests can only tell if a person is infected with the virus at the moment the test is performed, they still can be very important to assist in return to work protocols and minimize the risk of exposure to other employees. So long as the test is authorized by the employer, we will work with you to perform the test and would treat this similar to a pre-employment test. If the test is authorized by the employer, and the patient has NOT been exposed, we would treat this similar to a pre-employment test. The cost is \$150 per test. WorkPartners does not accept insurance other than work comp, and we do not treat or test patients without employer authorization.

10. Can we request a test to prove someone is healthy?

The PCR test is a test that tells us if the virus is present or not. It only tells us if the patient is infected with the virus on the day the swab was administered. The test does not provide us with any additional information regarding the overall health of the employee. If you are requesting the test due to a possible exposure, please submit a request for telehealth visit through our website [HERE](#). We do NOT accept walk-in patients for COVID-19 testing.

11. How are the results shared with the employer/employee?

For exposure or possible exposure related testing, the results are shared with the employee during their follow up telehealth visit and then the employer is contacted by a WorkPartners clinician. They are also loaded in the Employer Portal. Non-exposure, pre-employment or preoperative test results are reported through our portal just like any other result. If a preemployment or pre-operative test is positive, the patient is notified with instructions and directed to follow up with their personal physician.



12. If it ends up being work comp, will the telehealth visits be billed at fee schedule?

Yes. All visits and tests will become billable through the Work Comp fee schedule, as the extent of the visits, based on the results of the test will require a considerably higher level of medical decision making and reporting.

13. What is the process for returning an employee back to work following illness?

If an employee has been out because they were positive for COVID-19, s/he must a) not have a fever, b) have improvement in respiratory symptoms, and c) test NEGATIVE two times separated by 24 hours in order to be cleared to return to work. We will facilitate this process by having you, the employer, authorize a telehealth visit for the patient so s/he can be screened by our doctor. If their original test was not administered at WorkPartners, they will need to provide our office with their medical records indicating when the test was administered, the results, and the subsequent quarantine/isolation timeline. Once we receive the documentation, the telehealth visit will be scheduled. The doctor will review all records and the patient will be scheduled for their first test at one of our facilities. We do NOT accept walk-in patients for COVID-19 testing.

14. If an employee does have a positive result, would Work Partners do the contact tracing as well?

No. Contact tracing would need to be facilitated by your company. WorkPartners would handle the testing of those deemed to be at risk of exposure. However, WorkPartners is obligated to report a positive result to the county public health department, who may utilize nurse case managers and contact tracers to ensure containment.

15. Do you offer COVID-19 testing for pre-employment?

While the CDC does not recommend testing for asymptomatic patients, these tests can play an important role pre-employment protocols and minimize the risk of exposure to other employees. If your company feels that testing would be beneficial in your workflow, we can perform the test and report the results accordingly. If the test returns positive, we will advise both the employer and employee of the appropriate clinical steps. If this is something you would like to offer, we would be glad to add this to your current protocol. Testing is available at our Oceanside and National City locations. Out of an abundance of caution, all COVID-19 testing is performed by appointment only.

16. Can the testing be done to pre-screen temporary employees who are returning to work or switching to a different shift or crew?

While the CDC does not recommend testing for asymptomatic patients, these tests can play an important role in pre-employment protocols and minimize the risk of exposure to other employees. If your company feels that testing would be beneficial in your workflow, we can perform the test and report the results accordingly. If the test returns positive, we will advise both the employer and employee of the appropriate clinical steps. If this is something you would like to offer, we would be glad to add this to your current protocol. Testing is available at our



Oceanside and National City locations. Out of an abundance of caution, all COVID-19 testing is performed by appointment only.

17. Do you offer antibody testing?

We can offer whole blood antibody testing through our lab partner, Quest. We do not yet offer point of care, fingerstick testing. We will have these available but are awaiting to ensure that the one we choose receives FDA approval through the EUA (Emergency Use Authorization). We do not want one of the many unvalidated tests that raises concerns regarding the accuracy and possible false positives. Testing is confusing as it is. The last thing we want to do is introduce uncertainty and more confusion. However, we anticipate that FDA approval for point of care fingerstick tests should come shortly which will allow us to work with various employers on return to work or monitoring strategies, so long as there is a clear understanding of the limitations of these tests.

Due to the rapidly changing understanding of COVID-19 and available diagnostic tests, the information contained herein should be construed as accurate as of the date of print (05/22/2020) but may be subject to change at any time thereafter.