

COVID-19 FAQ

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 (formally known as 2019-nCoV) is the name for the respiratory syndrome caused by infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

What is antibody testing?

Antibodies are developed by the body in response to a viral infection and may provide potential immunity against future infection. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, COVID-19 antibody testing may indicate that "the person has been exposed to the virus and developed antibodies against it, which may mean that person has at least some immunity to the coronavirus." Antibody testing uses blood serum specimens and is sometimes referred to as serology testing.

How is the antibody testing performed?

Dr. Melamed will use a needle to draw a small quantity of blood from your arm and into a test tube. The test tube is then processed at our office and send to either LabCorp or Quest Diagnostics for testing.

What is the benefit of antibody testing?

The FDA has indicated that antibody testing has the potential to help healthcare professionals identify people who have been exposed to COVID-19 and who have developed an immune response. The FDA has also indicated that antibody testing can help identify those who could contribute a part of their blood, called convalescent plasma, which may provide an avenue for possible treatment for those who are seriously ill from the coronavirus.

How do I get tested for COVID-19?

If you suspect you may have COVID-19, contact our office or an authorized healthcare provider immediately for guidance. Dr. Melamed can review your symptoms to determine what appropriate testing is needed. If COVID-19 testing makes sense for you, we will direct you accordingly.

What is the turnaround time for test results?

Turnaround time for COVID-19 testing and/or antibody testing is typically 3-4 days from the time of pick-up but can vary due to high demand.

How will I know or be informed of my test results?

When your results are received by our office you will be notified by a member of our staff to schedule your results review appointment with Dr. Melamed.

What is the difference between this antibody test and the "rapid" finger prick test?

The "rapid tests" for the coronavirus antibodies has not been FDA approved. The serology tests described above have been FDA cleared.

What does it mean if I do not have antibodies (negative results)?

Negative results do not rule out SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19 infection and that follow-up testing with a molecular diagnostic should be considered to rule out infection and should be ordered only by clinicians who are familiar with the use and limitations of the test. Results from antibody testing should not be used as the sole basis to diagnose or exclude SARS-CoV-2 infection or to inform infection status.

What does it mean if I have antibodies (positive results)?

Positive results may be due to past or present infection with non-SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus strains, such as coronavirus HKU1, NL63, OC43, or 229E. Results from antibody testing should not be used as the sole basis to diagnose or exclude SARS-CoV-2 infection or to inform infection status. Depending on the results, which antibodies are positive, and your clinical history, Dr. Melamed may recommend additional testing.

Can I go to a LabCorp or Quest patient service center to be tested for COVID-19?

No. You must reach out to your doctor or an authorized healthcare provider for guidance. Only a doctor or authorized healthcare provider can collect a COVID-19 test specimen. The patient service centers do not collect COVID-19 test specimens.

Is it safe to come to the office for other testing services?

West LA Medical & Skincare has existing safety procedures to protect patients and employees from encountering any infectious diseases. During the COVID-19 public health crisis, we have taken more precautions. Strengthened measures include:

1. Avoiding unnecessary office traffic by receiving only the patient getting the test
2. Hand washing before and after all patient visits and examinations
3. Wearing an N95 mask and nitrile gloves for all patient encounters
4. Disinfecting all common area facilities multiple times per day
5. Scheduling only 1 patient at a time in order to avoid overcrowding.

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19 symptoms, or I am sick?

Patients who suspect they have COVID-19 should not come to our office without an appointment. You will first have a telemedicine call with Dr. Melamed to determine your condition, and he will determine the next appropriate course of action.

Is COVID-19 testing or SARS-CoV-2 antibody testing FDA approved?

COVID-19 and SARS-CoV-2 antibody testing is approved under the emergency use authorization (EUA).

- The Quest Diagnostics, LabCorp, and the Roche tests have not been FDA cleared or approved;
- These tests have been authorized by the FDA under an EUA for use by authorized laboratories;
- These tests have been authorized only for the detection of IgA, IgG, and IgM antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, not for any other viruses or pathogens;
- These tests have been authorized only for the detection of nucleic acid from SARS-CoV-2, not for any other viruses or pathogens; and
- These tests are only authorized for the duration of the declaration that circumstances exist justifying the authorization of emergency use of in vitro diagnostic tests for detection and/or diagnosis of COVID-19 under Section 564(b)(1) of the Act, 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3(b)(1), unless the authorization is terminated or revoked sooner.

[Click here to read FDA statement on serological test validation.](#)