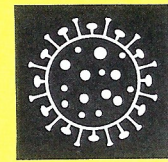


Testing for coronavirus

Information about testing for coronavirus and understanding your result.



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

What does the test involve?

The test for coronavirus usually involves taking a sample of the inside of the back of your nose and the back of your throat, using a long cotton bud. This may be uncomfortable but it won't be painful.

What happens to my sample?

We will send your sample to a quality-assured laboratory (lab). In the lab, your sample will be tested to see if you have coronavirus.

How do I find out about my test result?

You will get your test results either by text or phone call. The result will also be sent to your GP (doctor).

What your coronavirus test result means

There are three possible results:

(a) SARS CoV 2 RNA - detected

This means that you have coronavirus.

(b) SARS CoV 2 RNA - not detected

This means that coronavirus has not been found in your sample. This result does not mean that you never had coronavirus. It just means that the virus was not found in the sample the lab tested. It is possible that you had the virus and your immune system cleared it by the time you were tested, or there was no virus present in the sample.

(c) Indeterminate, invalid or inhibitory result

Sometimes a sample does not give a clear result. This is called an indeterminate result. It means that the lab cannot tell for sure if you have coronavirus or not. Sometimes the lab will be unable to get any result when it tests your sample. This is called an invalid or inhibitory result. This means that there is something in the sample which stops the laboratory test working properly. If you get an indeterminate, invalid or inhibitory result, you should ask your GP to arrange a new test, and behave as if you have the virus.

If your symptoms continue or get worse, phone your GP.



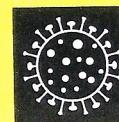
Visit [HSE.ie](https://www.hse.ie) for updated factual information and advice, or call 1850 24 1850



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There is no evidence to date that having coronavirus means that you are immune to getting the virus again. You may still be at risk of getting re-infected and passing the infection to others. You should still follow the stay at home advice to protect yourself and others.

Limitations of testing for coronavirus

- No test is 100% accurate. All tests have limitations. This is the same with the test for coronavirus. The test will find the virus in most people who have symptoms. But in some cases it may not pick up that you have the virus.
- Coronavirus may be missed for a few reasons. For example, a sample may get damaged in transit, it may leak or there may not be enough of the sample or virus present to provide a test result. A retest may be offered to a patient whose test is indeterminate or invalid. This should be discussed with your GP.
- The coronavirus testing method used cannot be guaranteed by the HSE as accurate, up-to-date, reliable, error-free, suitable, effective, or as having any specific result or outcome.
- Some test samples may go missing or we may be unable to identify a patient. This can happen in a very small number of cases due to human error. All steps are taken to prevent this and every effort is made to trace samples to patients.
- No organisation or person is liable for any aspect of your test if it goes wrong. This includes the way your test sample was taken, tested or handled. It also includes any information or service you got as part of your test and result.



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