Understanding COVID-19 Testing and Antibody Testing

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- Shortness of breath
- Fever over 100°F
- Cough
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat

Call your clinic or 1-877-AT-AVERA (1-877-282-8372).

COVID-19 Test

This test is the gold standard for diagnosis. It is the most sensitive and can identify whether you have COVID-19 even before you have symptoms. At Avera, you need a provider to order a COVID-19 test for you. If your provider decides you should be tested, you will then be sent to a sample collection site, where your nostril will be swabbed.

You can expect:
- This swab is then sent to a lab, where it is tested.
- Results can take several days to return.
- A positive result means that you are currently infected with COVID-19, and are able to spread the disease.
- A negative result means COVID-19 was not detected. However, this test can’t tell if you have been infected in the past, and a negative result does not mean you can’t be infected in the future.

Antibody Tests

- Antibody tests, sometimes referred to as IgG, IgM, and/or IgA tests, may be able to detect whether you’ve been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 and have developed antibodies. An antibody is a protein in your blood that your immune system uses to fight viruses and bacteria.
- Be very careful about these tests. Some tests advertised are not accurate or reliable, and are being marketed with false claims that have not been approved or thoroughly reviewed by the FDA.
- You may see these tests being used by workplaces and community-living facilities as a way to screen their staff or residents, but please be aware that this is a screening tool only, NOT a way to tell whether you currently have COVID-19.
- Uses for these antibody tests are still being evaluated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend that antibody tests be used in making health care decisions, and instead recommend that they only be used to monitor COVID-19 in our communities. At this time, Avera is using antibody testing as a screening tool only for patients who may be eligible to participate in a clinical study.

Cost

COVID-19 tests and antibody tests are both typically covered by insurance. Please call the number on the back of your insurance card to confirm. If you do not have insurance and are concerned about paying for the test, ask us about programs that help with the cost.