



Information Sheet F: Antibody testing

What are antibodies?

Antibodies are proteins produced by your body in response to an infection. They help your body to fight the infection, and they are part of your immune response. The antibodies are unique to that infection, rather like a key fits only one lock.

Will COVID-19 give me antibodies?

It might. Research has shown that people can develop antibodies to the virus which causes COVID-19. These can be detected with antibody tests (blood tests).

I have COVID-19 antibodies, so I must be immune?

Not necessarily. Having antibodies is just part of the picture. We don't yet know how effective these antibodies are, or how long they last.

So what does a positive COVID-19 antibody test mean?

A positive antibody test **DOES** mean:

- You have been exposed to COVID-19

A positive antibody test **DOES NOT** mean:

- You are immune to COVID-19
- You cannot infect others with COVID-19

Even if you have a positive antibody test, you will still need to:

- self-isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms
- stay at home for 14 days if you are in contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19

Antibody tests for COVID-19 infection are NOT routinely offered to members of the public. They are mainly used for research purposes, and for NHS and care home staff.