



INFORMATION FOR FACILITY STAFF ABOUT COVID-19 TESTING

Why am I being tested?

Your facility is testing all staff and residents for COVID-19, even if they don't seem sick. This testing is because people with COVID-19 may not have any symptoms and accidentally spread it to others. Testing helps to identify if someone has the virus early. This is important in residential facilities because residents are at a higher risk of serious illness or death due to COVID-19.

Testing is voluntary and highly encouraged. Testing is one way you can help to protect yourself and others at your facility. Being tested and knowing the results helps you to know that you are being safe when caring for your residents. Before you are tested, you will be asked to sign a form saying that you either agree to be tested or that you refuse to be tested.

What kind of test is it?

The test that your facility is providing is known as a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test and is used to detect SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. This is not an antibody (blood) test. Antibody tests are used to check if you had a previous infection with the virus and are not used to detect current infections.

If you agree to be tested, your facility will collect a nasal swab from you to send to a lab to be tested. If your test result is positive, your facility will be notified that somebody has tested positive.

Notifying entity:

Contact method:

Waiting period:

Will I need additional tests?

Your facility will ask you to be occasionally re-tested, even if your first test result is negative. Testing only provides information for a given point in time, and a person with a negative test result can become infected in the future. Re-testing helps continue to identify infections early. Your facility will determine the frequency of re-testing.

What about my health privacy?

Your privacy matters. Your test results may be shared with your local or tribal health department if follow-up is needed but will not be publically posted. Even if your test result is positive, your identity will not be revealed to residents, your co-workers, or the public.

What do I need to do after my test?

Continue to monitor yourself for signs of illness at all times and notify your facility right away if you develop any symptoms of COVID-19, such as cough, shortness of breath, measured fever or feeling feverish, chills, sore throat, runny nose, muscle pain, headache, or new loss of taste or smell.

Additional information is available at: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/providers.htm

What if my test result is negative?

If your test result is negative, it means the test did not find the virus that causes COVID-19 in your nose. Remember, even with a negative test result, you can still become infected in the future. Also, some people who have COVID-19 are tested too early for the virus to be found.

Your facility will ask you to be occasionally re-tested as a way to continue to identify infections early. You should also continue to monitor yourself for signs of illness at all times and notify your facility right away if you develop any COVID-19 symptoms. Remember to continue following all infection prevention and control practices as directed by your facility.

What if my test result is positive?

If your test result is positive, it means you have COVID-19 and can get others sick. You should not go to work and will not be able to return to work until your facility allows.

- Your facility will not discipline you if your test result is positive, and a positive test doesn't mean you did something wrong. In fact, your decision to be tested means you chose to help protect your residents. Your facility will help support you through the process.
- If requested, provide your facility with information on the people, equipment, and locations you were recently in contact with while at work. Your facility may use this information to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in the facility.
- You may be eligible for federal paid sick leave. Call your facility if you have questions about your facility's leave policy or other human resources considerations for the time you are required to be away from work.

After testing positive for COVID-19, you should practice self-isolation and self-monitoring to protect yourself, your family, and your community from exposure.

- **Stay home.** This means do not go to work, school, or public areas. It is important that you avoid contact with others. If you are not able to do this safely, you may be able to go to an isolation site instead. Talk with your local or tribal health department, a doctor, or call 211 to get more information on resources that may help you.
- **If you have symptoms,** you need to self-isolate for at least 10 days since symptoms first began AND for at least 3 days after symptoms resolve. Start counting the first day you were sick as day 0, and count 10 days from day 0.
- **If you do not have symptoms,** you need to self-isolate for as long as directed by your doctor or local or tribal health department. This is at least for 10 days after the date of your positive COVID-19 test, assuming you do not develop symptoms. You may also need to be re-tested.
- **If you develop symptoms,** you need to self-isolate for at least 3 days after the symptoms resolve AND at least 10 days since the symptoms first began.
- Regardless of whether or not you have symptoms, you will not be able to return to work until allowed by your facility.

Take the following steps to self-isolate and self-monitor:

- **Monitor your symptoms and consult a doctor** to discuss any medical concerns or questions. Seek medical care if you become sicker, and seek emergency medical care immediately if you have trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to wake up, or bluish lips or face. If you need emergency medical attention any time during the self-isolation period, call 911 and let them know that you were diagnosed with COVID-19.
- If you don't have a doctor but have health insurance, call your insurance company. They can connect you with a doctor in your insurance network.
- If you don't have a doctor and are uninsured, call 211. They can assist you with finding health care coverage and also connect you to a doctor that serves people without health insurance. [The Wisconsin Association of Free and Charitable Clinics](#) and [Wisconsin Community Health Centers](#) are also helpful resources for under- or uninsured individuals.
- **Postpone all non-essential medical appointments until you are out of isolation.** If you have an essential appointment during the isolation period, please tell your local or tribal health department, and they will help coordinate the visit.
- **Take steps to prevent others that you live with from getting sick,** such as separating yourself from other people in your home as much as possible, wearing a face mask when you are around other people, covering your coughs and sneezes, washing your hands often, avoiding sharing personal household items, and cleaning high-touch surfaces every day. Other people who you live with or recently had close contact with should now stay home as well and watch for symptoms for 14 days after their last close contact with you. If someone in your home is at a higher risk, they may want to consider finding a short-term living arrangement separate from you, if possible. If you or one of your contacts are not able to isolate from others in your current living arrangements, contact your local or tribal health department to ask whether an isolation facility is an available option.

If you test positive for COVID-19, your local or tribal health department may contact you to help you with self-isolation and self-monitoring. They may also ask for a list of all the people you recently had contact with in order to notify them that they may have been exposed. This is called "contact tracing."

To protect your privacy, your local or tribal health department will only inform your contacts that they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive. They will not reveal your identity. Contact tracing doesn't mean you did something wrong and doesn't mean you are to blame for exposing others. In fact, your decision to be tested means you chose to help protect your family and your community.

Additional resources to help support you if you test positive for COVID-19

- Review www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19 for additional information on how to protect yourself and your family after testing positive for COVID-19.
- Call your local or tribal health department if you have additional questions or for resources to help you self-isolate and self-monitor. Contact information for your local or tribal health department is available at: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lh-depts/counties.htm.
- Call 211 to answer your questions or for resources to help you with food or other needs while self-isolated.