

## Types of COVID-19 Tests

**If you are ill or think you have been exposed, get tested within 1-2 days.**

There are two different types of tests, diagnostic tests and antibody tests. Only **DIAGNOSTIC** tests can be used to detect if you currently have COVID.

**DIAGNOSTIC** tests diagnose an active infection.

**A positive result means you must isolate from others.**

There are 2 types of diagnostic tests:

**MOLECULAR** these tests are preferred for diagnosing an active case of COVID-19. They range from rapid results in less than an hour, up to 48 hours, depending on the test and the provider.

**ANTIGEN** positive results are usually accurate; however, false negatives can be an issue. These are rapid tests with results in less than 30 minutes.

**Antibody** tests are done by a blood draw to see if you had COVID-19 at any time. These tests are not used to diagnose an active COVID-19 infection.

	MOLECULAR TEST	ANTIGEN TEST
Also known as...	PCR, diagnostic, viral, molecular, NAAT, LAMP , Garfield County free test sites test, your providers office, or popular brand name Cue	Viral test, diagnostic, popular brand name BinaxNOW
How long it takes to get results?	They range from less than an hour to up to 48 hours. Some at-home tests and some provider offices offer the <1 hour turnaround. The Garfield County state-funded free testing sites only provide results within 36-48 hours	Typically between 15 – 30 minutes
Is another test needed?	Not usually. This type of test is highly accurate	Positive results are highly accurate, but false negatives can happen. Negative tests must be confirmed with a MOLECULAR test if you have symptoms.
Is this test ok for return to school?	Approved for return to school. A positive result means you must isolate. A negative result allows you to go back to school.	For schools, refer to Colorado State Health Department ‘ <a href="#">Return to Learn</a> ’ and ‘ <a href="#">Who Needs to Quarantine</a> ’ documents BinaxNOW tests for school re-entry must be performed in the presence of school or medical personnel.
How is the sample taken?	Typically, a nasal swab, though there are some saliva tests	Nasal swab (swab inserted just inside nose, not a deep swab)
What it shows...	Diagnoses active COVID-19 infection	Diagnoses active COVID-19 infection
What it can't do...	It can't show that you had COVID-19 in the past	It may not detect an early COVID-19 infection. You may have to back up this test with a molecular test. It can't show that you had COVID-19 in the past

For information on COVID data, testing, school guidance, and vaccines go to <https://www.garfield-county.com/public-health/novel-coronavirus/>