Antibody Testing for COVID-19

WHAT IS AN ANTIBODY?
Antibodies are proteins that the body creates in response to infections. They attach to pathogens (like a virus) and help the body identify and destroy them. It takes days to weeks for the body to develop antibodies after an infection.

WHAT IS AN ANTIBODY TEST?
An antibody test (serology test) checks your blood, looking for antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. This may tell you if you had a past COVID-19 infection.

Antibody tests should not be used to diagnose a current COVID-19 infection. An antibody test may not show if you have an active COVID-19 infection due to taking days to weeks after infection for your body to make antibodies.

To see if you are currently infected, you need a viral test. Viral tests identify the virus in samples from your respiratory system, such as a swab from the inside of your nose. If you believe you may be infected with COVID-19, please contact your primary care physician to schedule a viral test.

TEST RESULTS:
A positive antibody test means that the person was infected with COVID-19 in the past or recently, and that their immune system developed antibodies to try to fight it off. You may test positive for antibodies even if you have never had symptoms of COVID-19. This can happen if you had an infection without symptoms, which is called an asymptomatic infection.

A negative test means that there is no evidence of a prior exposure or that your body has not had time to develop an antibody to the virus.

We do not know yet if people who recover from COVID-19 can get infected again, or how long antibodies to the virus will protect someone. Scientists are working to understand this.

The test is a simple finger prick to check the blood for active antibodies. You will receive your results within 15 minutes of the test.

Regardless of whether you test positive or negative, the results do not confirm whether or not you are able to spread the virus that causes COVID-19. Until we know more, continue to take steps to protect yourself and others.

Johnson County Community Health Services

(660) 747-6121 • 723 PCA Road, Warrensburg MO