

Testing can be a crucial step to reducing the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Testing [locations](#) are in every community, and more recently, over-the-counter or at-home self-testing kits have become widely available. Self-tests offer fast results and may be more convenient than laboratory-based tests and point-of-care tests. In some cases, self-tests can provide a preliminary result while waiting for a laboratory test.

How to Get an At-Home Self-Test

- Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order 2 sets of 4 at-home COVID-19 tests. They are free and arrive via the U.S. Postal Service. If you already ordered your first set, order a second today. Visit: [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) to place an order for these tests.
- At-home/self-test kits can be purchased online or in local pharmacies and retail stores.
- UC ANR [Risk & Safety Services](#) can assist you with obtaining self-tests.

When to Consider Self-Testing

- ✓ If you begin having [symptoms](#) like fever, sore throat, runny nose, or loss of taste or smell, or
- ✓ At least 5 days after you come into close contact/exposure to someone with COVID-19, or
- ✓ To screen for infection: prior to or following travel; after a holiday break; before attending an activity or gathering with a large group of people—especially those who are at risk of severe disease or may not be up to date on vaccines.
- ✓ At-home Antigen self-tests results are an acceptable method of screening for compliance related to the UC's [COVID-19 Vaccination Program Policy](#). Local, free, [laboratory analyzed testing](#) is recommended as at-home kits can sometimes be in limited supply.
- ✓ Following a *positive* test result, Antigen at-home self-administered tests may be used as a resource to reduce isolation time to less than 10 days. If symptoms have improved, and your fever has gone, you may test after a minimum of 5 days isolation, and return to work if the test results are negative. In this case, test results must be documented, by taking a photo of the test kit, with your name and the test date. See ANR's [Quarantine, Isolation, and Return to Work Protocol](#) and [chart](#) for more information on return to work timelines.

How To Use a Self-Test

Read the complete manufacturer's instructions before using the test. Ensure the test unit is not past its use by/expiration date. Follow the instructions exactly and perform the steps in the order that they are listed. Wash or sanitize your hands before beginning. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about the test or your results. Refer to the CDC's videos on How to [Use a Self-Test](#) and How to [Interpret Self-Test Results](#).

After you have the results, discard the specimen collection swab or tube and test in the trash, [clean all surfaces](#) that the specimen may have touched, and wash your hands.

To review the instructions for COVID-19 antigen test kits available from UC ANR, see the links below for the specific test you are using:

iHealth COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test

Instructions: <https://www.fda.gov/media/153924/download>

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBt_H4Gc-rU

OraSure Technologies InteliSwab™ COVID-19 Rapid Test, OTC

Instructions: <https://www.fda.gov/media/149912/download>

CareStart COVID-19 Antigen Rapid At-Home Test

Instructions: <https://www.fda.gov/media/151248/download>

If Your Test Result Is Positive

See ANR's [guidance](#) on Reporting a Positive Test or Exposure. Potential exposures or confirmed COVID-19 cases among UC ANR employees must be reported using the [COVID-19 Screening Report](#) survey. Contact [Jodi Rosenbaum](#), Disability and Leave Coordinator, for assistance. Inform your supervisor of your work and health status and let close contacts know they may have been exposed. If possible, positive results from an at-home/self-administered test should be confirmed by an additional medical/lab proctored test.

You should stay home or isolate for 10 days and wear a mask if others could have contact with you. Also, tell a healthcare provider about your positive test result and stay in contact with them. If your illness becomes severe, seek medical attention. If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately. To avoid spreading the virus to others, follow [CDC recommendations](#). Quarantine or isolation time and return to work may vary, see ANR's [guidance](#) on return to work after exposure or illness.

If Your Test Result Is Negative

In most cases, reporting is not necessary for negative results. However, employees who have requested or have been granted an exemption from the UC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Policy are required to provide negative test results at least weekly. All employees must continue to monitor your symptoms and exposures. Follow typical protection and prevention practices. Use ANR's [COVID-19 Screening Report](#) survey and follow its recommendations based on your responses. If you are symptomatic and the test was at-home/self-administered, you should follow up with a medically proctored in-person test. It is possible for a test to give a negative result in some people who have COVID-19. This is called a false negative. You could also test negative if the specimen was collected too early in your infection. In this case, you could test positive later during your illness.

Resources

How to Collect an Anterior Nasal Swab ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) – CDC Print Flyer

How to Collect a Nasal Mid-Turbinate Swab ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) – CDC Print Flyer

Using Your Self-Test ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) – CDC Print Flyer

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Self-Testing](#) webpage

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [Testing](#) webpage

Free At-Home Test Kits from <https://www.covid.gov/tests>

FDA's listing of [authorized tests](#)

UC ANR [Reopening Guidelines and Resources](#)