What is an antigen test?
- **Antigen tests** detect the presence of a specific viral protein in a collected sample. This protein is known as an antigen and is on the surface of the COVID-19 virus.
- **Antigen tests** perform best when the person is tested in the early stages of infection with COVID-19.

What is the difference between an antigen test and a PCR test?
- A **PCR** (polymerase chain reaction) is a molecular test for COVID-19 that is performed in a laboratory and detects a virus's genetic material.
- **Antigen tests** for COVID-19 are generally less able to detect the virus than a **PCR** test.

What does it mean if my antigen test is positive?
- A positive test indicates antigen from the COVID-19 virus was detected and you are presumed to be infected.
- Positive results on an **antigen test** are fairly reliable, meaning that the test is generally positive only when the COVID-19 virus is present in your specimen.
- Sometimes a swab or test kit can get contaminated during the process of running an **antigen test** and cause the test to be positive when in fact you are not infected, this is called a **false positive**.
- Your healthcare provider can assist in understand the meaning of a positive antigen test.

Isolate Yourself
- CDC recommendations provide that cases should isolate for a minimum of 5 days after onset and may be released after they are without fever for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication) and show improvement in symptoms.
- Cases without symptoms should isolate through 5 days after their specimen collection date.
- Regardless of symptoms, CDC recommends wearing a well-fitting mask when around others for 10 days following symptom onset or test collection (whichever was first).
- Though not legally binding, CDC recommends:
  - Stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home to the extent possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available. Household contacts can consider relocating to a separate, uninhabited housing location if available to decrease their risk of exposure.
  - Where possible, ask others such as friends or family, to get food or necessities for you.
  - If you need to leave home, such as to seek medical care, wear a mask.

Inform Your Close Contacts
- For information on what to expect if you were possibly exposed to COVID refer to: [https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/CloseContactGuidance.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/cedep/novel-coronavirus/CloseContactGuidance.pdf)

Monitor Your Health
- Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated and, if needed, take medication to reduce your fever.
- If your symptoms get worse and you need to seek healthcare, call ahead and tell the provider that you have been diagnosed with COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Practice Healthy Habits
- Though not legally binding, CDC recommends:
  - Wear a mask in public settings when around others for 10 days following symptom onset or test collection (whichever was first).
  - Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for ≥ 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand rub.
  - Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces regularly, including your phone.
Returning to Regular Activities

- Once you've completed your isolation period at home, you can return to your regular activities.
- Both the CDC and TDH discourage employers and schools from requiring a medical note for clearance to return to work or school after an individual has COVID-19. TDH does not provide isolation or quarantine “clearance” letters to individuals. Those who test positive for COVID-19 may provide their employers with documentation of their positive test result (such as a photo, print out of lab results, or note from a provider that administered the test) to indicate their need for exclusion from in-person activities during their period of isolation. Employers and schools are encouraged to provide access to sick leave, telework, and other accommodations without individual documentation from a doctor or nurse regarding an individual's need to stay home.

Learn More

- Tennessee Department of Health: https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncoy.html
- Questions? Call (615) 770-6940