Montefiore Associate Guide to SARS-CoV-2 IgG Antibody Testing (COVID-19 Antibody Test)

These are answers to frequently asked questions that can help you understand your test results.

**What is SARS-CoV-2?** This abbreviation stands for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus Type 2, which is the name of the virus that causes COVID-19.

**What kind of antibody does this test look for?** Your body makes antibodies when it is fighting an infection. This test is looking for a kind of antibody called IgG. IgG antibodies can take a few weeks to develop. In some infections, these antibodies can be present for a long time after the infection has been resolved but there is not enough information to know how long antibodies made as a result of COVID-19 infection stay present in the body.

**Which specific test is Montefiore Medical Center using for SARS-CoV-2 IgG antibody testing?** The Montefiore blood test uses a chemiluminescent microparticle immunoassay (CMIA) to detect IgG antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 in human blood. It is a commercially available test made by Abbott.

**What test results will be reported?** The results for this test are reported as positive or negative.

**What does a positive test mean?** Having a positive antibody result suggests that you were exposed or infected with COVID-19 at some point. But these results can not be used to say if you have COVID-19 infection now and do not say for certain that you have been exposed or infected in the past. This is because the antibody test can also detect other viruses in the same family as the virus that causes COVID-19. At this time there is not enough scientific evidence about antibodies for SARS-CoV-2 to know whether or not you are immune to the virus that causes COVID-19. We recommend that all people (even those with positive antibodies) consider themselves susceptible to becoming infected with the virus in the future.

**What does a negative result mean?** Negative results do not rule out previous infection with COVID-19. It can take a few weeks to develop IgG antibodies after an infection. Some people do not make antibodies against the virus that causes COVID-19 and some people take longer than others to make them.

**What does it mean if my antibody test is negative but I had a PCR/Nasal Swab that was positive?** Some people who have tested positive with the PCR/nasal swab test in the past may have a negative antibody test. This could be because their immune system did not make enough of the antibodies to be detected by the antibody test. It could also be because it is too early to detect antibodies since some people take longer than others to develop antibodies. We recommend that all people (even those with previous positive PCR/nasal swab tests) consider themselves susceptible to becoming infected with the virus in the future.

**How does this test result change my ability to work?** Montefiore’s guidance around healthcare workers aligns with the New York State Department of Health. IgG Antibody testing for SARS-CoV-2 is not used for clinical decision making and the results should not change the decisions around fitness to work.
All Montefiore associates, regardless of test results should follow Montefiore infection prevention and social distancing policies and recommendations, including the following:

- Wearing a mask at work for as long as universal masking remains the Montefiore protocol
- Maintain 6 feet of distance between associates whenever possible
- Practice frequent hand hygiene—especially after contact with elevator buttons, doors, other individuals, and before and after eating
- Avoid congregating in office suites
- Avoid congregating in cafeteria, lounges, parking lot, outdoor spaces of MMC
- Avoid congregating at the start and end of work shifts (when “punching in and out”)

How will I get the results? The best and fastest way to get results for the COVID-19 antibody test is through MyChart. This is a secure patient portal and results are available on any device no matter where you are. MyChart results should be available in 2 days. You can sign up by going to: https://mychart.montefiore.org/MyChart/signup. For those without MyChart access, results will be given through secure email message to your Montefiore email account (or by mail if a Montefiore email account is not available) and may take up to 10 days to distribute.

Who do I call if I do not understand my results or do not receive my results? If you have questions about your results, do not have access to a computer or have not received your results in 10 days, you can call your local OHS. For MMC employees, that number is (718)920-5406.

More information on COVID-19 can be found at:
Montefiore’s Intranet
New York State DOH: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home