When should you get tested for COVID-19?

COVID-19 has persisted over the last 18 months, the guidelines of when to get tested have fluctuated. The Center for Disease Control attempts to clarify the confusion surrounding COVID-19 testing. The following are in need of a COVID-19 test:

- People who have symptoms of COVID
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea

- Most people who had close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes) with someone with confirmed COVID-19
- Fully-vaccinated people should be tested 3-5 days following known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test.
- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past three months and recovered do not need a new test as long as they do not have symptoms.
- Unvaccinated people who have taken part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19.
- People who have been asked or referred to get tested by their healthcare provider.

What are your COVID testing options?

COVID-19 tests can test for current infection or past infection. There are two general categories of tests. A viral test tells you if you have a current infection. Viral tests include the following:

- **PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) Test**: The test is done using saliva or a swab from your nose or throat. You can get results the same day within 20 minutes or up to 3 days.
- **Rapid Antigen Test**: The test is done using saliva or a swab from your nose or throat. You can get results the same day rapidly, around 15 minutes or less.

An antibody test is a blood test that determines if you had a past infection. Antibody tests do not diagnose a current infection. The test is done by drawing a blood sample from your arm or a finger stick. You can get results in up to 3 days.

Self home tests are also available. Some require a nasal specimen and other tests require a saliva specimen. These self-collection kits and tests are available either by prescription or over the counter, without a prescription, in a pharmacy or retail store. They are used to detect current infection. Self-home tests may not always be accepted as a valid form of testing. Be sure to check any testing rules or requirements when getting tested for work, school, or travel purposes.

Where can I get tested?

Each county has a combination of permanent and rotating testing sites. We have listed no cost options provided by county health departments below. Testing is also widely available at commercial pharmacies, call ahead to confirm.

**DeSoto County**
DeSoto County Health Department 1031 East Oak Street 863-491-7580 x140, x250 X102 PCR only. M-F 8am - 5pm 863-491-7580 x140, x250 X102 Do not enter building, call and will meet outside at entrance B. (car side swabbing)

**Charlotte County**
Mid-County Regional Library Parking Lot 2050 Forrest Nelson Blvd., Port Charlotte No cost. No appointments. Appointment bookings can be made ahead of time on the Curative website. PCR Test, Mon-Thur 10am - 7pm and Fri-Sat 10am - 6pm

**Manatee County**
Bradenton Area Convention Center 1 Haben Boulevard Palmetto, FL 34221 PCR and Rapid Test available Daily, 7am - 7pm

**Sarasota County**
Sarasota County Health Department 5400 Bradenton Road, Sarasota, FL 34234 Both PCR and Rapid Tests: Monday - Saturday: 9am - 5pm OR Ed Smith Stadium 2700 12th Street, Sarasota, FL 34237 PCR Tests Only: 7 Days a Week 9am - 5pm

**Suncoast COVID-19 Stats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>7 Day Rolling Ave. of Daily New Cases</th>
<th>A Population 12+ with at Least One Vaccination Dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>180 last wk: 187</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeSoto</td>
<td>60 last wk: 51</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manatee</td>
<td>438 last wk: 498</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarasota</td>
<td>410 last wk: 482</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contact Us**

Please forward this to your network, and when you have stories about overcoming and thriving during COVID-19, please send them to Hannah Saeger Karnei at: HSaegerKarnei@thepattersonfoundation.org

#COVID19 @ThePattersonFdn

COVID-19 is not going away any time soon. Recently, cases in Southwest Florida and the four county region have spiked as a result of the delta variant. Encourage your family, friends, stakeholders, clients, and others to get vaccinated. Getting vaccinated is the best protection against the variants, including delta.