St. Agnes Academy-St. Dominic School

COVID-19 Testing FAQs

What are the types of COVID-19 testing? What is Rapid Antigen Testing?

Antigen Tests, also known as Rapid Diagnostic Tests, work by detecting an 'antigen', which is a protein that sits on the surface of the virus. They are very accurate at catching the virus when someone has enough of it to be contagious, and they give results in as little as 15 minutes. They can be conducted anywhere and are cheap enough that they can be used routinely. They are faster and cheaper than molecular tests, but may be less accurate. If you get a positive result from an antigen test, contact your doctor to find out if you should confirm the result with a PCR test.

Molecular Tests, also known as PCR tests, are very common. These tests are very sensitive and can detect small amounts of genetic material from the virus. They are currently the most accurate tests available and are primarily used to diagnose if someone who has symptoms is infected with COVID-19. PCR tests are more likely to catch an infection even if someone has such a tiny amount of the virus in their system that they're not contagious. But they also take a few days to get results. PCR tests are important to confirm a rapid test to make sure a person who tested positive actually needs to keep isolating. PCR tests are also helpful in a clinical setting, where a physician needs to be completely sure whether a person has Covid-19, influenza or something else, so they can treat them appropriately.

Antibody tests are often confused with antigen tests, even though they are fundamentally different. Antigen and molecular tests tell you if you currently have an infection. Antibody tests, on the other hand, tell you if you have been infected with coronavirus in the past. For an antibody test, your blood is drawn to check if it contains antibodies to the virus. It can take 1-3 weeks after an infection for your body to make antibodies. Antibody tests—also known as serology tests—are only recommended to detect a past infection.

How reliable are the antigen test results?

Rapid antigen tests are very accurate at detecting the virus when people have enough of it to be contagious—whether they have symptoms or not. And, because the results are so quick, people know if they're contagious in time to immediately adjust their behavior and protect those around them.

The antigen test detects when a viral load and infectivity are highest which would help prevent the spread of COVID-19 on campus by asymptomatic people. However, no test is 100% accurate and may result in false negatives & false positives. Therefore, a PCR test is recommended for confirmation.

Rapid tests may not detect the virus if you've just been exposed and aren't contagious yet. That's why rapid testing shouldn't be used as a one-time test. They're designed to be used regularly, so you catch the virus as soon as a person becomes contagious.

Who will be tested?

Those to be tested:

- ALL faculty, staff, EDA staff, noncontact sport coaches who opt in
- SAA-SDS 7th-8th basketball teams and coaches REQUIRED since a contact sport
- US basketball team and coaches REQUIRED since a contact sport
- US students opt in
- JH students opt in

Those not to be tested:

- It is not recommended to retest individuals who have tested positive and do not have symptoms for COVID-19 for up to 3 months from their last positive test.
- Statistics show that younger children are less likely to transmit the virus, so we will not test students in the Lower School at this time.

Remember, this testing is for asymptomatic students, faculty, and staff. Please do not come to school with any COVID-19 symptoms because you are getting tested that day.

How will I get my test results?

You will be contacted by phone if your child tests positive. Per our health plan anyone testing positive will have to leave campus as well as any individuals deemed to be close contacts. Contact tracing will begin after a positive antigen test is completed on campus. All test results will be reported to the Tennessee Department of Health.

What do I do if my child tests positive?

If the antigen test is positive, we recommend getting a PCR test within 24 hours at a testing facility of your choosing through your insurance.

- If PCR is positive, you will remain in isolation for 10 days from the rapid test date. Those individuals deemed to have been in close contact will remain in quarantine for 7-14 days.
- If PCR is negative, then the student will provide a negative test result to the school nurse and can return to campus provided there are no symptoms. Those deemed to have been close contacts and placed in quarantine will be released and return to on-campus learning.

How do I opt in?

Please complete the Google form and sign the consent form to participate in weekly COVID-19 testing. Once you opt in, it is for the semester. Students may opt in by 3:00 p.m. Friday to begin participating in testing the following week.

Is it mandatory to participate in testing?

Testing is voluntary, however, we believe it's a community responsibility to protect each other. Testing people who are asymptomatic is an essential part of our collective efforts to stop the invisible chain of transmission.