

Your guide to COVID-19 testing

An overview for NHS staff and test requesters

The Antigen PCR Test



Tests for the presence of **virus** in a patient

infection

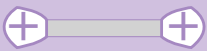
PCR test window



Optimal testing time between 2 days before and 7 days after symptom onset



Test can be carried out using:
Nose swabs
Throat swabs



Positive

Continue PPE use and follow Trust policies in terms of patient pathway if admitted

Does not tell you

how ill the patient will become, or when they contracted the virus



Negative

Test is **only 75% accurate** - symptomatic patients with high suspicion of infection should be **re-tested 2-3 days later**

If high suspicion of COVID-19 and repeat PCR negative, could consider antibody test

UHB: Test for patients requested through microbiology. Test for staff requested via line manager and Occupational Health

The Antibody Test



Tests if the patient has been **previously infected** with the virus and has had an immune response

Antibody test window

Optimal testing time at least 14 days after symptom onset



Test can be carried out using:
A blood sample



Positive

Patient has previously been exposed to COVID-19 and mounted an immune response

Does not tell you

if the patient is protected from becoming ill again if exposed to COVID-19, or how long protection may last

You must still



Negative

Test is **80% accurate in mild disease** (but higher in severe disease) so false-negatives may occur

The patient may have failed to mount an antibody response and is still susceptible

UHB: Test for patients through laboratory request form/electronic requesting. Test for staff requested via antibody.testing@uhb.nhs.uk