

# COVID-19 Testing

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## What to do while awaiting results:

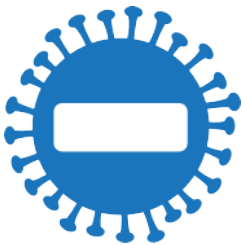
### If you are being tested because of symptoms:

- Stay at home until your test results are back (except to get medical care). Avoid all public places and public transportation.
- Keep at least 6 feet from people and animals, including those in your household and continue to wear a mask.
- Avoid sharing personal household items, wash your hands and high touch surfaces regularly.
- Inform your work (or your child's school) that you are awaiting results.

### If you are being tested because you are a close contact:

- Wear a high-quality mask for 10 days and get tested on day 5 following exposure to someone with COVID-19.

## If your test result is negative:



This test shows your result at this moment in time. It offers no protection from future infection. Continue to take steps to protect yourself. You should not be around others until you are feeling better and are free of fever (without the use of fever reducing medicine) for at least 24 hours.

## If your test is positive:

Most people do well, but it is important to take care of your health and protect those around you. **See page 6** for how to access your results via the SPH Patient Portal if you were tested through the hospital. **If your test result is positive using an at**



**home test kit and you need general guidance**, please reach out to Public Health at (907) 235-8857, your provider, or the SPH COVID nurse line at (907) 235-0235.

**Notify your provider as soon as possible** of your positive result to discuss treatment options which may reduce illness severity.

**Stay home, avoid all public places & public transportation** (except to seek medical care), avoid sharing personal household items (including the restroom), wash your hands and high touch surfaces regularly. Inform your work (or your child's school) that you are positive. Wear a face covering if your symptoms allow, even in the house when not in a separate bedroom. Designate one household member to bring you food and other necessities. If you need non-medical help (e.g., groceries or other support) call 2-1-1 or 1-800-478-2221. Also see **local resources page 6**. Please see **page 5** for instruction on notifying close contacts.



### Isolation Period:

Stay home for at least **5 days** starting with day 0 as the day your symptoms began (or the day you received your positive test result if you are asymptomatic). If you are asymptomatic at time of test and develop symptoms after testing positive, your 5-day isolation period starts over with day 0 as your first day of symptoms. If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house. Stay home **until your fever resolves** without the use of fever reducing medication. **Continue to wear a mask** around others for 5 additional days.

**Note:** people who are moderately to severely ill with COVID-19 may require longer isolation period.

**Seek immediate medical care if you develop concerning symptoms, including:**

- difficulty breathing
- bluish gray or whitish lips or face
- pain or pressure in the chest
- severe, constant dizziness or light-headedness
- confusion
- difficulty waking up
- slurred speech

**Breathing Exercise:**

Deep breathing can help open up your lung tissue and make you feel better as you recover. Lie or sit with your back straight and put one hand on your chest and the other over your belly button. Breathe in slowly through your nose while pushing your belly button outward. Hold your breath for a few seconds, then slowly exhale. Repeat for a full minute. Consider having someone get you a pulse oximeter at a local pharmacy to check your oxygen saturation level. If your oxygen reading is **below 94% when you are resting**, contact your primary care provider or go to the ER.



**Pregnancy considerations:**

Pregnant patients are at high risk for developing severe COVID-19. Contact your OB-GYN or family doctor at the onset of your isolation period for additional monitoring and instructions.

**Pediatric considerations:**

COVID-19 is generally milder in children than adults. Almost half of children will have an asymptomatic infection. Medically complex children are at increased risk of severe COVID. COVID-19 infection is associated with a rare, but potentially severe inflammatory syndrome called **Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome**, a serious condition that causes severe inflammation of multiple organs including the heart, lungs, blood vessels, kidneys, digestive system, brain, skin, or eyes. Signs and symptoms depend on which areas of the body are affected. Contact your child's doctor for any concerning symptoms including ongoing fever, stomach pain, blood shot eyes, diarrhea, dizziness or lightheadedness, skin rash, or vomiting.

**Preventing reinfection:**

Extensive research from many countries confirms that the best protection against a second bout of COVID-19 infection is to get vaccinated.

You can be vaccinated as soon as you are out of isolation (usually 5 days). Call your provider or the SPH Testing & Vaccine Clinic at (907) 235-0235 to make a vaccination appointment.

**Home Test Kit FAQs**

**What is the difference between an antigen test and a PCR test?**

An antigen test, such as the iHealth COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test, detects proteins from the virus. Molecular tests (also known as PCR tests) detect genetic material from the virus. Antigen tests are very specific for the virus, but not as sensitive as molecular tests. This means that a positive result is highly accurate, but a negative result does not rule out infection. If your test result is negative, you should discuss with your healthcare provider on whether an additional test is necessary and if you should continue isolating at home.

**Could I still have Covid even though my home test resulted negative?**

There is a higher chance of false negative results with antigen (home tests) than with laboratory-based molecular tests. This means that there is a higher chance a home test will give you a negative result when you have COVID-19. The higher your viral load, the greater the likelihood is of Covid being detected on a home test kit.

**Should I re-test if my home test result is negative?**

If you have an exposure or are symptomatic and your first test is negative, please wait 1-3 days and retest with the second test in your home-test kit.

**What if a secondary line appears, but it is faint?**

Even a *faint* secondary pink or red line indicates a positive result.

**Can I use an expired home test kit?** Almost half of the FDA-approved home tests have been granted extended expiration dates. Visit [FDA.gov](https://www.fda.gov) or the manufacturer's website to see if your test type and lot number are still viable.

**My home test resulted positive, what should I do now?** A positive result means COVID was detected; it is not necessary to get a lab verified test. Please

isolate and contact your primary care provider if your home test result is positive.

If you do not have a primary care provider, call Homer Medical Center at 235-8586 or the SPH Family Care Clinic at 235-0900 to schedule an appointment. See page one of this packet for additional guidance for positive results.

### Where can I get more home test kits?

Every household is eligible for up to 12 home test kits, free of charge. Visit [covid.gov/tests](https://covid.gov/tests) to claim yours.

Check your local pharmacies (Safeway and Ulmer's) for home test kits. **Note:** *most insurance companies will reimburse up to 8 home test kits per month. SPH as well as the Homer Chamber of Commerce have a supply of test kits available to the public for free.*

## Treatment Information:

### What is monoclonal antibody COVID-19 treatment?

Monoclonal antibodies are like your body's own antibodies, as they help your immune system quickly destroy the COVID-19 virus before it harms you or causes hospitalization.

Fortunately, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized monoclonal antibody treatment for eligible patients.

If you test positive for COVID-19, have symptoms, or are unvaccinated and have had a known exposure, talk to a healthcare provider right away. Monoclonal antibody treatment must be given as soon as possible within 10 days of symptom onset. Treatment is usually given through a one-time IV infusion.

### Who can receive monoclonal antibody treatment?

You may be eligible for monoclonal antibody treatment if you have had mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 10 days, have tested positive for COVID-19, and have an underlying medical condition. You may also be eligible for treatment if you are unvaccinated and have had a known exposure to a positive case. If you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 but have tested positive for the virus and are considered high-risk, you may still be eligible for treatment. Talk with a healthcare provider to see if monoclonal antibody treatment is right for you. A referral is needed to receive treatment.

You are **not eligible** for treatment if: you are hospitalized due to COVID-19, require oxygen therapy due to COVID-19, require an increase in baseline oxygen flow rate due to COVID-19, or are on chronic

oxygen therapy due to an underlying non-COVID-19 related health issue.

### Are oral antivirals available?



Yes! The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized oral therapeutics to treat mild-to-moderate COVID-19 for those 12 and older who are at high-risk for progressing to severe COVID-19.

Current therapeutics on the market include Paxlovid and Molnupiravir, both given within 5 days of symptom onset and for a duration of 5 days.

**Due to supply, there may be intermittently be limitations on who can receive treatment. Alaska receives new allocations of therapeutics from the federal government on a weekly basis and biweekly basis, and it is anticipated supply will increase over time. Please check with your provider for current availability. If you do not have a local provider, call:**

- Homer Medical Center - (907) 235-8586
- SVT Health and Wellness - (907) 226-2228
- Kachemak Medical Group - (907) 235-7000
- Ninilchik Community Clinic - (907) 567-3970
- SPH Family Care Clinic - (907) 235-9000

### Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP):

For immune compromised individuals who can't build a good immune response to COVID-19 vaccination or those who have severe adverse reactions to COVID-19 vaccines, an alternative prevention option is available. Providers will refer to this option as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) because it is a medication that is taken by individuals who are not currently COVID-19 positive and have not had a recent exposure to a COVID positive individual to prevent COVID-19 disease. **EVUSHELD** (tixagevimab/cilgavimab) is a long-acting monoclonal antibody therapy that has been authorized by the FDA under [EUA for pre-exposure prophylaxis for COVID-19](#). It is only authorized for individuals age 12 years or older and weighing 88 lbs. or more who are not currently infected with or recently exposed to COVID-19, and is only for individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised or cannot be fully vaccinated with any available COVID-19 vaccines. EVUSHELD is **not a substitute for vaccination** in individuals for whom COVID-19 vaccination is recommended. This product is given by intramuscular injection and may help prevent infection for up to six months.

## COVID-19 Treatment Options

Name/Manufacturer	Paxlovid (Pfizer)	Remdesivir (Gilead)	Molnupiravir (Merk)	Bebtelovimab (Eli Lilly)
Age eligibility	12 years & older	All ages	18 years and older	12 years and older
Initiate within number of days since symptom onset	5 days or fewer	7 days or fewer	5 days or fewer	7 days or fewer
Route of administration	Oral	IV	Oral	IV
Duration of treatment	5 days	Infusion over 3 days	5 days	One IV injection

### Contact tracing:

**The sooner people know about possible exposure, the quicker they can begin to take precautions.** Following exposure to COVID-19, the CDC recommends wearing a high-quality mask for 10 full days, and testing on day 5. Day 0 is considered the last day of exposure to someone with COVID-19. If your test is positive (even if you are vaccinated), please notify your own close contacts.

**Close contacts are anyone who was within 6 feet of you for a total of 15 minutes or more** over 24 hours during the two days prior to when your symptoms started, or when you were tested, whichever is earlier - this is considered the "infectious period".

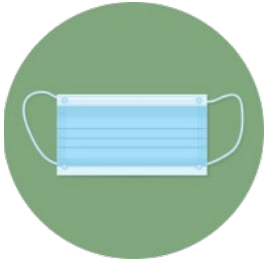
**Use the template below to help you with contact tracing.**

Start by filling in the date your symptoms started (or the date of your test if you have not experienced any symptoms). **Then, go back two days:** *this is the time frame that you would be infectious and should alert others of your results.* Include all days until you were able to isolate from other people.

2 days before symptoms (or test date if no symptoms)	1 day before symptoms (or test date if no symptoms)	Date symptoms started (or test date if no symptoms)	Days after symptoms until you were able to isolate from others (or test date if no symptoms)
Date:	Date:	Date:	Dates:
Contact names:	Contact names:	Contact names:	Contact names:

## If you have ongoing exposure to someone with COVID-19:

It is very important for people with COVID-19 to remain apart from you, even if you are living together. If you are unable to separate from the person with COVID-19 in the home, you will have an **ongoing exposure**, meaning you will be repeatedly exposed until that person is no longer able to spread the virus to other people.

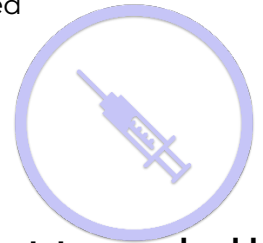


**People with COVID-19 can spread the virus to other people before or after they develop symptoms.** The person with COVID-19 and all members of the household should wear a well-fitted mask around others, including each other while in the home. If possible, **only one member of the household should care for the person with COVID-19** to limit the number of people in the household that are in [close contact](#) with the infected person.

A person with COVID-19 is considered infectious starting 2 days before they develop symptoms, or 2 days before the date of their positive test if they do not have symptoms.

### If you have an ongoing exposure to someone with COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status you should:

- Get tested immediately when you are identified as a close contact, and again on day 5 after your last exposure to the infected household member.
- Wear a mask when in contact with the person with COVID-19 throughout the infected person's isolation period.
- Isolate and test immediately if you develop symptoms of COVID-19.
- Wear a mask when indoors in public for 10 days after last exposure to the infectious person.



### If you have a one-time exposure to someone with COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status you should:

- Wear a mask any time you are around others or in public for ten full days
- Get tested on day 5
- Isolate and test immediately you develop symptoms of COVID-19.

**NOTE:** The above guidance **does not apply to:** health care workers, long-term care facilities, or other congregate settings. In certain congregate settings that have high risk of secondary transmission (such as correctional and detention facilities, homeless shelters, or cruise ships), recommendations vary. Please refer to your employer or Alaska Department of Health and Social Services for guidance.



#### Additional guidance for those in health care settings:

Asymptomatic health care workers with a higher-risk exposure, and patients who have close contact with someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection should have a series of two viral tests for SARS-CoV-2 infection regardless of vaccination status. In these situations, testing is recommended immediately (but not earlier than 2 days after the exposure) and, if negative, again 5 days after the exposure.

The information in this handout is sourced from the CDC and Alaska DHSS, with adaptations from the CPH patient education handout.

## How do I get my results?

**Instructions for those tested at the SPH Testing & Vaccine Site – not applicable if using a home test kit.**

- **Within 24 hours of your visit today you should receive an email with a link to sign up for the portal.** Please check your spam folders if you do not see the email within 24 hours.
- **If you have signed up for our patient portal in the past, you don't have to wait for an email** - visit [sphosp.org/for-patients/patient-portal](https://sphosp.org/for-patients/patient-portal) and click the appropriate button for you under the MyCareCorner logo.
- **Current turnaround time for results is 12-24 hours.** Turnaround time is subject to change and may vary based on a variety of conditions including availability of testing supplies.
- **If you have questions or need assistance,** please call the patient portal helpline at (907) 235-0881. This line is staffed Mon-Fri from 8 AM-3 PM. If forwarded to a voice message, clearly say your name, date of birth, email address, and a call back number. If you need assistance outside of those hours, please call the SPH COVID Testing & Vaccine Clinic at (907) 235-0235.
- **You must visit the SPH MyCareCorner online patient portal in order to get your test results.** You can also download and print the test results from your portal for your records as soon as they're available.

**You will not be notified if you are positive, you are responsible for accessing your results on the hospital portal.**

- Please note that your provider will not be notified of results unless requested.
- Requesting results be sent to your provider does not mean you will be contacted with your results.
- Requesting results be sent to your provider will simply enter them into your primary care medical record. Please reach out to your provider if your test result is positive.

**If using a home testing kit and need general guidance,** you are welcome to contact the SPH COVID Testing & Vaccine Clinic at (907) 235-0235, the local Public Health office, or your primary care provider.

**Please note:** the SPH MyCareCorner patient portal is not the same as the Homer Medical Center/clinic patient portal.

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### Local resources:

#### Prescriptions:

**Safeway Pharmacy**....(907) 226-1060

**Ulmer's Pharmacy**....(907) 235-8594  
(offers curbside pick-up)

**Website:** [ulmerspharmacy.com](https://ulmerspharmacy.com)

#### Food & Groceries:

**Save-U-More**....(907) 235-8661  
(offers curbside pick-up)

**Safeway**....(907) 226-1000  
(offers curbside pick-up)

**Homer Food Pantry**...907-235-1968  
(can deliver within Homer city limits; call ahead for contactless pick-up)

**Website:** [homerfoodpantry.org](https://homerfoodpantry.org)

# BOOSTING IMMUNITY:

## FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE TIPS ON PREVENTION & OPTIMIZING IMMUNE FUNCTION DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

*The Institute for Functional Medicine has outlined several steps that you can take to reduce your chances of being exposed to respiratory virus and to boost your immunity in the event of exposure. The following information outlines what you can do to help keep yourself and your family safe.*

### LIFESTYLE

**Stress reduction:** Chronic stress can negatively alter immune system responses, making you more likely to get sick. Identify your personal stress reduction strategies and practice them regularly.

**Sleep:** Sleep has a big influence on immune function, so it is essential to get plenty of sleep. Practice good sleep hygiene and maintain consistent sleep hours—turn off screens, ensure the room is cool, quiet, and dark, and set a reminder to help yourself go to bed on time.

**Exercise:** Moderate, regular physical activity helps to boost immune system function by raising levels of infection-fighting white blood cells and antibodies, increasing circulation, and decreasing stress hormones. Establish and follow an exercise program to not only help prevent respiratory infections but also to improve cognitive and physical resilience.

**Nutritious foods/diet:** Research indicates that brightly colored vegetables and fruits boost immunity better than most supplements. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables—aim for 10 servings per day. Include fermented vegetables or other probiotic-containing foods.

### NATURAL MEANS OF BOOSTING IMMUNITY

Most over-the-counter medications only treat the *symptoms* of viral infections; most don't actually help the immune system fight the infection. Although there is no research to determine what is effective specifically for coronavirus, the following are some natural modalities you can utilize to both address symptoms as well as boost your immune system if you do come down with an illness:

**Self-care:** When battling upper respiratory infections, top priorities are plentiful hydration and rest. Drink plenty of fluids; homemade vegetable or bone broths are also extremely beneficial. Various herbal teas/hot drinks can help with hydration and reducing symptoms; good choices include peppermint, ginger, eucalyptus, chamomile, and hot water with lemon, honey, and cinnamon.

**Sore throats:** Salt water gargles are excellent for loosening mucus and helping fend off bacterial throat infections. Hot teas and lozenges containing slippery elm are excellent demulcents (to relieve minor pain and inflammation of mucous membranes) for soothing irritated sore throats. Two tablespoons of honey in hot water can also help to soothe and decrease throat inflammation and pain. Chamomile and peppermint teas are also helpful for soothing irritated sore throats, as are teas or infusions made from marshmallow root and licorice root, both of which can act as soothing demulcents.

**Respiratory congestion & sinuses:** For respiratory congestion, use a humidifier, vaporizers, or steam inhalers, or spend time in steamy baths or showers. Vaporizers and inhalers can also be used with decongestants or essential oils such as eucalyptus, menthol, peppermint, or frankincense. Nasal xylitol sprays are very beneficial, as is nasal irrigation using a neti pot or nasal irrigation bottle. Buffered saline is easy to make or can be purchased in packets and eliminates any irritation to delicate, irritated mucous membranes.

# SUPPLEMENTS, NUTRIENTS, AND FOODS TO SUPPORT IMMUNE FUNCTION

There are several nutrients, plant-based botanicals, and supplements that can boost immune function and provide symptom relief during illness and may help to shorten the duration of illness. For preventing and treating viral upper respiratory infections, consider some of the following:

**Vitamin C:** Vitamin C may help to prevent infections, including those caused by bacteria and viruses. Regularly administered vitamin C has been shown to shorten the duration of colds, and higher doses of vitamin C during an illness can also act as a natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory.

**Vitamin D:** Vitamin D, known as the “sunshine vitamin,” is one of the most important and powerful nutrients for supporting the immune system. Numerous studies have shown that it helps reduce the risk of colds and flu. Unfortunately, a high percentage of the population is deficient, so daily supplementation (ideally in the form of vitamin D3) offers the best protection.

**Vitamin A:** For short-term use and particularly for those with moderate vitamin A deficiency, supplementation can be extremely helpful in supporting the body’s ability to fight infections, particularly with regard to respiratory infections.

**Zinc:** Zinc plays a significant role in boosting immunity. Often available as lozenges, zinc can help to reduce the frequency of infections as well as the duration and severity of the common cold when taken within 24 hours of onset.

**Selenium:** Selenium, a key nutrient for immune function, is also an antioxidant that helps boost the body’s defenses against bacteria, viruses, and cancer cells. It may particularly help to protect against certain strains of flu virus. Selenium is easily obtained from foods, with the richest source being Brazil nuts.

**Honey:** Honey, preferably raw, is a good demulcent (it relieves minor pain and inflammation of mucous membranes), has antioxidant properties, and has some antimicrobial effects. It is helpful for coughs and sore throats and can be added to hot tea.

**Garlic:** Garlic contains a variety of compounds that can influence immunity. Some studies have shown that both fresh garlic as well as aged garlic extract and some other garlic supplements may reduce viral upper respiratory infection severity as well as function in the prevention of infection with viruses that can cause colds.

**Probiotics:** Probiotics contain “good bacteria” that not only support the health of the gut but also influence immune system functioning and regulation. Studies have shown that probiotic use can decrease the number of respiratory infections, particularly in children.

**Please note:** Due to the novelty of COVID-19, no peer-reviewed research has been published regarding the effectiveness of dietary or lifestyle interventions for its prevention or treatment. \*This document is only intended to identify modalities that may boost your immune system. It is not meant to recommend any treatments, nor have any of these modalities been proven effective against coronavirus. Always consult your physician or healthcare provider prior to using any of these modalities. For up-to-date information on COVID-19, please consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).



**Source:** This information was taken directly from the Institute for Functional Medicine at [www.ifm.org/news-insights/boosting-immunity-functional-medicine-tips-prevention-immunity-boosting-covid-19-coronavirus-outbreak/](http://www.ifm.org/news-insights/boosting-immunity-functional-medicine-tips-prevention-immunity-boosting-covid-19-coronavirus-outbreak/)