

## How to interpret your COVID-19 test report

Your COVID-19 test is a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) diagnostic test which tests for the presence of COVID-19 viral RNA in your nose or mouth. The UCSC Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory performs this test: [UCSC Molecular Diagnostic Lab](#)

Your test is labeled: MDL-SARS-CoV2.

Your COVID-19 test result has two possible outcomes:

- MDL-SARS-CoV2 - **Not detected**: COVID-19 virus was not detected in your sample. At the time of the sample, you probably were not infected with COVID-19.
- MDL-SARS-CoV2 - **Detected**: COVID-19 virus was detected in your sample. You are currently infected or have been infected with the virus within the last 3 months.

## More information about a negative COVID-19 test

A negative (virus not detected) test does not clear you from quarantine. If you were exposed to someone with COVID-19, you will need to self-quarantine for the full 14 days, even with a negative test. This is because the test might not pick up COVID-19 virus while you are in the incubation period, which lasts 14 days.

## More information about a positive COVID-19 test

If your test is positive (virus detected), isolate for 10 days after the first day of symptoms. If you have no symptoms, isolate for 10 days after the day of your test. Read the Santa Cruz County Health Department booklet for tips on how to isolate:

[https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/pdfs/coronavirus/COVID-19\\_Patient\\_Instruction\\_Booklet\\_self\\_quarantine\\_and\\_self\\_isolation.pdf?version=052520](https://www.santacruzhealth.org/Portals/7/pdfs/coronavirus/COVID-19_Patient_Instruction_Booklet_self_quarantine_and_self_isolation.pdf?version=052520)

## Follow up testing

We do not recommend a second COVID-19 diagnostic test to determine if the virus has cleared. This is because the test can pick up very small amounts of inactive COVID-19 particles that can linger in your nose or mouth, leading to a false positive result. After ten days, as long as you are improving, the risk of infecting someone else is very low and follow up testing is not necessary.