

Our understanding of COVID-19 continues to evolve. Currently, the standard for making a diagnosis of COVID-19 remains the PCR assay. At this time, use of antibody testing should be reserved to support a diagnosis of COVID-19 rather than being the primary method of diagnosis. In most circumstances, antibody testing can help to identify patients who have had a previous infection of COVID-19. Given that we do not know the full characteristics of antibody testing, it will be available for ordering for inpatients to start.

Protocol

Antibody testing may be ordered only under the following circumstances:

1. Inpatient only
2. Approval from an ID attending is required, and the ordering provider will be asked to record the name of the approving provider at the time of ordering
3. Once approval is obtained please order through EMR using the order COVID-19 IgG Antibody (LAB31818)



Placeholder for EMR screen image.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long does it take for antibodies to appear in patients infected with COVID-19?

Our understanding of COVID-19 infection is still evolving however antibodies generally appear 14 days after infection.

2. My patient's result is positive, does that mean that they definitely had COVID-19?

No. A positive antibody test is not sufficient to make a diagnosis of COVID-19. We do not yet have full information on the cross-reactivity (i.e. false positive) rate of the antibody test.

3. My patient's result is positive, do they need to be considered a PUI with use of COVID-19 PPE?

No. PCR testing, not antibody testing, determines the need for COVID-19 isolation and use of COVID-19 PPE. Please remember that PCR testing is still the method of choice to make a diagnosis of COVID-19.

4. If my patient is positive for antibodies, does that mean that they are immune to COVID-19?

We currently do not have enough information regarding COVID-19 to know whether the presence of antibodies confers immunity. Patients should still be counseled to observe good hand hygiene as well as social distancing.

5. What does a negative antibody result mean?

A negative result does not necessarily mean that the patient does not have COVID-19. It is possible that the patient has COVID-19 however has not yet produced any antibodies.

6. What if I want to order the antibody test for an outpatient?

Currently the only way to order antibody testing for an outpatient is to send them to Quest for testing or to CareWell. Please note that antibody testing will be an out-of-pocket expense for the patient.