



City of
Langley Washington

Antibody Testing Update

PRESS RELEASE

WhidbeyHealth Medical Center

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Current Information about Antibody Testing

April 22, 2020:

There is a great deal of media attention about antibody testing, sometimes referred to as serology or immunoglobulin testing. Here's what you need to know:

- Today, diagnostic testing for Coronavirus measures antigens that makes people sick; basically the actual virus.
- Antibody testing doesn't detect the virus. It measures a person's antibodies, which are the body's natural response to fight an infection.
- In the early phases of infection, antibodies haven't built to a detectable level. This can take two weeks or longer for a serology test to register a positive result; too late to provide useful information to guide treatment. Further, patients who are tested soon after being infected are likely to have a negative test result when they actually do have Coronavirus.

This is still a very important test. Widespread use of antibody testing can measure the number of people who have been infected whether or not they felt ill. This could be enormously important to public health authorities as they plan mitigation and 'curve-flattening' responses to the pandemic. At this point, we do not anticipate implementation of this testing.

Our team at WhidbeyHealth is following this and other developments carefully so that we can learn more about caring for patients and perhaps perform some future testing on site at our

facilities. Right now, we are fortunate to be getting test results in about 24 hours, often sooner.

Everything about Coronavirus continues to change rapidly, a rate of change unlikely to slow down in the near future. We will share what we learn as quickly as possible, as soon as accurate information is available.

The World Health Organization has made a scientific brief on this available here:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/advice-on-the-use-of-point-of-care-immunodiagnostic-tests-for-covid-19>

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