

# COVID-19 Testing Quick Information Sheets

## **COVID-19 Antigen Tests:**

There have been a lot of questions recently about the availability of COVID-19 antigen tests. These are tests that detect viral proteins from nasal or nasopharyngeal swabs. They are relatively fast and inexpensive, but they have a high rate of both false positives and false negatives. Therefore, these assays will not be pursued currently at UVMHC.

See this link from the Association of Public Health Laboratories for more information about Laboratory Testing:

<https://www.aphl.org/programs/preparedness/Crisis-Management/Documents/APHL-SARSCov2-Antigen-Testing-Considerations.pdf>

## **COVID-19 Serology Tests:**

Serologic testing, which requires a blood collection specimen, has limited utility in clinical medicine. Serology testing, particularly in a region like Northern New England where the COVID-19 prevalence is low, is prone to false positive results. The UVMHC laboratory will refer this testing to our reference laboratory for patients that meet clinical criteria for testing.

See this link from the UVMHC Laboratory Test Update

<https://www.uvmhealth.org/medcenter/Documents/Departments-and-Programs/Pathology%20Test%20Updates/COVID%2019%20Serology.pdf>

## **COVID-19 Molecular-Based Tests:**

The most widely available and sensitive COVID-19 testing is based on detecting viral genetic material (RNA), often from a nasal or nasopharyngeal swab. The testing requires specialized equipment, but the results are very sensitive and has a low rate for false positives and false negatives. Therefore, these assays are currently used at UVMHC and at our reference laboratories.

See this link from the Association of Public Health Laboratories for more information about Laboratory Testing:

<https://www.aphl.org/programs/preparedness/Crisis-Management/COVID-19-Response/Pages/Lab-resources.aspx>

## **PATHOLOGY & LABORATORY MEDICINE**

111 Colchester Avenue | Mail Stop: 233MP1 | Burlington, Vermont 05401

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(802) 847-5121 | (800) 991-2799