

# FACT SHEET FOR PATIENTS

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
Influenza SARS-CoV-2 (Flu SC2) Multiplex Assay

Updated: August 5, 2021

Coronavirus  
Disease 2019  
(COVID-19)

You are being given this Fact Sheet because your sample was tested for the viruses that cause Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), influenza A, and influenza B using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Influenza SARS-CoV-2 (Flu SC2) Multiplex Assay.

This Fact Sheet contains information to help you understand the risks and benefits of using this test for the diagnosis of COVID-19 and/or influenza. If you have questions or would like to discuss the information provided after you read this Fact Sheet, please talk with your healthcare provider.

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**For the most up to date information on COVID-19, please visit the CDC COVID-19 webpage:**  
<https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>

**For the most up to date information on Influenza, please visit the CDC Influenza webpage:** <https://www.cdc.gov/flu>

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## Why was my sample tested?

You were tested because your healthcare provider believes you might have been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 based on your signs and symptoms and/or because:

- You have been in close contact with a person who might have, or who is known to have, COVID-19, and/or
- You live in or have recently traveled to a place where transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 is known to occur.

Your samples will help your doctor determine if you have the virus that causes COVID-19 or another respiratory virus.

## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus which is a new virus in humans causing a contagious respiratory illness. COVID-19 can present with a mild to severe illness although some people may have no symptoms at all. Older adults and people of any age who have underlying medical conditions have a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Serious outcomes of COVID-19 include hospitalization or death. The SARS-CoV-2 virus can be spread to others not just while one is sick, but even before a person shows signs or symptoms of being sick (e.g., fever, coughing, difficulty breathing, etc.). A full list of symptoms of COVID-19 can be found at the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

## What is Influenza?

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Influenza viruses can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of the flu can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain underlying health conditions, are at higher risk for serious flu complications. There are two main types of influenza viruses: types A and B. Both type A and B influenza viruses regularly spread in people, and are responsible for seasonal flu each year. Influenza viruses can be spread to others before and after a person shows signs and symptoms of being sick.

## What is the Influenza SARS-CoV-2 (Flu SC2) Multiplex Assay?

Flu SC2 is a test designed to simultaneously detect three types of viruses: two types that cause influenza (type A and type B) and the virus that causes COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) in respiratory specimens, for example nasal or oral swabs.

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**Where can I go for updates and more information?** The most up-to-date information on COVID-19 is available at the CDC webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>. In addition, please also contact your healthcare provider with any questions/concerns.

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## What are the known and potential risks and benefits of the test?

Potential risks include:

- Possible discomfort or other complications during sample collection.
- Possible incorrect test result (see below for more information).

Potential benefits include:

- The results, along with other information, can help your healthcare provider make informed decisions about your care.
- The results of this test may help limit the spread of the viruses that cause COVID-19, influenza A, and/or influenza B to your family and those you come in contact with.

## What does it mean if I have a positive test result for SARS-CoV-2?

If you have a positive test result for the presence of SARS-CoV-2, it is very likely that you have COVID-19. Therefore, it is also likely that specific measures such as isolation, social distancing, and wearing a mask will be recommended so that you can avoid spreading the virus to others. You should follow CDC guidance to reduce the potential transmission of disease.

There is a smaller possibility that this test can give a positive result that is wrong (a false positive result) particularly when used in a population without many cases of COVID-19. Your healthcare provider will work with you to determine how best to care for you based on the test results, medical history, and your symptoms.

## What does it mean if I have a positive test result for influenza A and/or influenza B viruses?

If you have a positive test result for the presence of influenza A and/or influenza B viruses, it is very likely that you have the flu. If you have a positive result for an influenza virus, your healthcare provider will determine

the best way to care for you based on the test results along with other factors in your medical history. There is a very small chance that this test can give a positive result that is wrong (a false positive result).

## What does it mean if I have a positive test result for SARS-CoV and influenza (A and/or B) viruses?

It is possible for an individual to be infected with influenza A virus, influenza B virus, and/or SARS-CoV-2 virus at the same time. Your healthcare provider will work with you to determine how best to care for you based on these test results, your medical history, and your symptoms.

## What does it mean if I have a negative test result for SARS-CoV-2, influenza A, or influenza B viruses?

A negative test result for any of the viruses detected by this test means that these viruses were not found in your sample. For COVID-19 and influenza, a negative test result for a sample collected while a person has symptoms usually means that SARS-CoV-2, influenza A or influenza B viruses are unlikely to be the cause your current illness.

However, it is possible for this test to give a negative result that is incorrect (false negative) in some people with COVID-19 or influenza. You might test negative if the sample was collected early during your infection. You could also be exposed to these viruses after your sample was collected and then have become infected. Your healthcare provider will consider the test result together with your symptoms, possible exposures, and other health information in deciding how to care for you. It is possible that your healthcare provider may collect another sample in order to repeat the test or conduct other tests.

It is important that you talk with your healthcare provider to help you understand what your results mean and the next steps you should take.

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**Where can I go for updates and more information?** The most up-to-date information on COVID-19 is available at the CDC webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19>. In addition, please also contact your healthcare provider with any questions/concerns.

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## Is this test FDA-approved or cleared?

No. This test is not yet approved or cleared by the United States FDA, but it has been issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). FDA may issue an EUA when certain criteria are met, which includes that there are no adequate, approved, available alternatives.. The EUA for this test is supported by the Secretary of Health and Human Service's (HHS's) declaration that circumstances exist to justify the emergency use of in vitro diagnostics (IVDs) for the detection and/or diagnosis of COVID-19. This EUA will remain in effect (meaning this test can be used) for the duration of the COVID-19 declaration justifying emergency use of IVDs, unless it is terminated or revoked by the FDA (after which the test may no longer be used).

## What are the approved alternatives?

There are approved/cleared influenza tests. Any tests that have received full marketing status (i.e., cleared, approved), as opposed to an EUA, by FDA can be found by searching the medical device databases here:

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/device-advice-comprehensive-regulatory-assistance/medical-device-databases>. A cleared or approved test should be used

instead of a test made available under an EUA, when appropriate and available. FDA has issued EUAs for other tests that can be found at:

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-legal-regulatory-and-policy-framework/emergency-use-authorization>.

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