

COVID-19 RETESTING TIPS

My child just tested positive at school, but I want to get them retested because they don't have any symptoms.



- A child without symptoms or known exposure, with a positive antigen test, SHOULD be retested using a PCR within 48 hours of the first test.
- If a child does have a known exposure (i.e., they are in quarantine), a positive antigen test indicates COVID-19 infection, and the child SHOULD NOT be retested.
- If a child receives a positive PCR test, with OR without symptoms or known exposure, the child SHOULD NOT be retested.

I got my child retested because I think the first test was a false positive. Their second test was negative, so I want to bring them back to school.

- If the first test was an antigen test and the second was a PCR test, done within 48 hours of the first test, the negative PCR test will be used to guide next steps, like isolation.
- If both tests were PCR tests, the positive result will be used to guide next steps, like isolation.



A school may need to consult with the public health department regarding test results if they don't clearly fit within the situations described above. The school will work with the public health department to determine appropriate next steps.

Why would two tests have different results?

The amount of virus in an infected person's nose and throat can go up and down over time. Because of this, a test collected on two different days during COVID-19 infection may show different results. If specimens are collected using different techniques or if different labs are used, this can also cause inconsistent test results, even when infection is present. PCR and other NAATs, especially lab-based tests, are more sensitive than antigen tests. This means they are more likely to detect infections that an antigen test may miss, especially in people without symptoms. False positive lab-based NAAT (e.g., PCR) results are unlikely.

