ANTIBODY TESTING FOR COVID-19 INFECTION
PATIENT INFORMATION
JUNE 2020

What are antibodies?

o   An antibody is a blood protein produced in the body that combines chemically with bacteria, viruses, and other foreign substances.
o   Antibodies help to fight infections and also indicate evidence of past infections.

Can antibodies be measured for COVID-19?

o   Yes, serological tests are available to look for an antibody response to the COVID-19 virus
o   Serology tests should <u>not</u> be used if a current COVID-19 infection is suspected- to diagnosis a current infection a different type of test needs to be performed.
o   Appropriately validated serology tests for antibodies can be used to show evidence of prior infection- a recent infection or an infection in the past.
o   Rochester Regional Health Laboratories (RRHL) are able to perform high-quality, validated assays for COVID-19; the full name for this test is "SARS-CoV-2 AB"
o   Serologic testing currently requires a blood draw

Why not test everyone for COVID-19 IgG antibody?

o   It is not known if evidence of antibodies means you are immune (protected) from a second infection (re-infection)
o   Currently, the primary use for COVID-19 antibody testing is epidemiologic, public health or other research studies

What is cost of testing?

o The current cost for COVID-19 antibody testing is $100, payable prior to testing
o Payment in full prior to testing is necessary due to limited clinical circumstances for which testing will be covered by insurance
o Our collection sites will accept credit or debit cards for this payment (no cash or checks)
o RRH will not bill your insurance for this testing
o If you believe your insurance may cover some or all of this testing cost, please contact your insurance carrier to determine if you may be eligible for full or partial reimbursement

Where can I get tested?

o For a listing of RRH Patient Service Centers which offer COVID-19 antibody testing please see the Rochester Regional Health Laboratories website.
o Testing is also offered through Rochester Regional Health Immediate Cares- but only as part of an urgent care visit

If I am tested, what do my antibody test results mean?

o Review your test results with your provider- sometimes additional testing may be needed.
o If your test is "positive"– it means there are antibodies; if your test is "negative"– it means antibodies are not found.
o Not everyone who has been infected with COVID-19 will develop an antibody response, and it is currently not known how long antibodies may persist following infection.
o **A "positive" antibody test result does not guarantee that you cannot get infected again- you must still continue masking, social distancing and practicing good hand hygiene- otherwise you could get sick again or infect others.**