FAQ: NEGATIVE TEST RESULTS

Below are some common questions about what to do following a negative test result. We thought you might like to know our answers.

Q: If I got a negative test result, then I’m out of the woods and don’t need to do anything, right?
A: No. If you were tested for coronavirus, that likely means your symptoms (or your exposure to coronavirus) are concerning to health care providers and/or you’re at risk for contracting it, so you should be very careful. You should:

- Limit exposure to others as much as possible. Avoid large groups and settings.
- Stand at least 6 feet apart from others.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds — often.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wear a face mask in all public settings. If you do not have one, please make one. Visit bit.ly/CDC-mask for instructions. You do not need to be able to sew.
- Wipe down hard surfaces, especially common, shared surfaces, with disinfectant. Common surfaces include keyboard, phone, shower knobs, toilet handles, sink surfaces and door knobs. Visit bit.ly/disinfecthome for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s tips on keeping your home safe.
- Wash your linens two times a week with a laundry detergent. Use tumble dry and hot settings.
- Avoid public transportation (Metro, taxis, buses).

Q: Are there any treatments to either help prevent or treat COVID-19?
A: Not really, but the best management to prevent COVID-19 is to follow the steps we included above. There currently isn’t a vaccine against developing COVID-19. Once diagnosed, there are few treatment options, other than resting, drinking plenty of fluids, and using over-the-counter medicines for cough, fever, etc. Antibiotics are ineffective because COVID-19 is a viral infection and is not bacterial. Tamiflu is a drug to treat the flu, and it will not protect you from getting the new coronavirus. Researchers internationally have been working to develop antivirals and treatments, but now, there is no specific treatment or vaccine.

Q: Should I get retested at any point?
A: If you feel any symptoms, such as fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea, your primary care physician may recommend additional testing at that time. Visit houstonmethodist.org/find-a-doctor to find a primary care physician. Visit houstonmethodist.org/virtual-health-care to schedule virtual appointments without going on-site to see the doctor.
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**Q:** I need to show my test results to my employer. How do I get a copy?

**A:** Visit MyChart at [mychart.houstonmethodist.org](http://mychart.houstonmethodist.org) to access your test results and order a copy of your medical records.

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**Q:** If I am at risk for COVID-19, is my family at risk?

**A:** Likely, yes. If your family member starts to feel any symptoms, such as fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea, contact a primary care physician. He or she may recommend testing. Visit [houstonmethodist.org/find-a-doctor](http://houstonmethodist.org/find-a-doctor) to find a primary care physician. Visit [houstonmethodist.org/virtual-health-care](http://houstonmethodist.org/virtual-health-care) to schedule virtual appointments without going on-site to see the doctor.

To limit the risk of COVID-19 in your home, please do the following:


- Wash your linens two times a week with a laundry detergent. Use tumble dry and hot settings.

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**Q:** If I have a negative test result, can I go outside and return to life as normal?

**A:** It is possible to have a negative test and yet still have COVID-19. If you continue to have symptoms, such as fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea, you may need to be tested again. Visit [bit.ly/covid-results](http://bit.ly/covid-results) for more information on how to interpret COVID-19 results. Please contact your primary care provider for further guidance.

At any rate, you should be very careful. You should:

- Limit exposure to others as much as possible. Avoid large groups and settings.
- Stand at least 6 feet apart from others.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds — often.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth or eyes.
- Wear a face mask in all public settings. If you do not have one, please make one. Visit [bit.ly/CDC-mask](http://bit.ly/CDC-mask) for instructions. You do not need to be able to sew.
- Wash your linens two times a week with a laundry detergent. Use tumble dry and hot settings.
- Avoid public transportation (Metro, taxis, buses).