

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RAPID ANTIBODY TEST

### **Are these antibody rapid tests reliable?**

This new developed test kit, the IgG-IgM combined antibody test kit, has sensitivity of 88.66% and specificity of 90.63%. However, there were still false positive and false negative results in studies done to date.

The reasons for the false negative may be due, first, to low antibody concentrations. When IgM and IgG levels are below the detection limit of this rapid test, the test results will be negative. Second, the difference in individual immune response antibody production could be one reason for the false negative results in COVID-19 patients.

More studies are being done daily to confirm results so that better more accurate tests are being manufactured as quickly as possible.

### **If these tests aren't 100% reliable why should I use them?**

The challenge with a global pandemic is the world simply doesn't have enough resources to test everyone. However, the more that test positive and are taken out of circulation for two weeks the more likely we as a community can slow the spread.

### **What can be done to address a false negative?**

Upon discharge instructions are given to each and every patient detailing what to do if you test negative but have symptoms. We also have specific instructions for those that have no symptoms and test negative to continue social distancing.

### **If I had symptoms over a month ago will this test pick it up?**

The concept behind antibody testing is that if you have a previous infection that has subsided your body would still have the IgG antibody in your blood circulation. Therefore, if you have a positive IgG bar on your test but not IgM it could indicate acute infection is over. However, it does NOT mean you are not contagious. We still recommend anyone with a positive IgG only result to still self-quarantine. Rarely, a positive IgG could indicate you had a previous infection with another coronavirus such as SARS or MERS but that is unlikely in the United States.

### **What other test options are available?**

As of now, we can do nasal swabs and/or collect sputum (spit) and send that to Quest and Labcorp. Unfortunately, Quest and Labcorp simply do not have enough of the swabs and transport tubes to accommodate the numbers of tests needed.

### **I've heard of the Abbott Test, is that an option?**

The Abbott Instrument tests RNA and is a good test and although less likely is still capable of giving false negatives. Unfortunately, the capacity of Abbott to make new machines is only 400/week and the federal government is only allocating this equipment to the hotspots such as NYC, Detroit and New Orleans. We hope to have Abbott testing capability soon but for now we continue to send our high risk cases for additional lab testing.

### **Does StarMed have a protocol for testing higher risk individuals?**

Absolutely yes. Individuals at higher risk are screened during their Virtual Visit and the Curbside Testing Site is given instructions when to do a nasal swab in addition to fingerpick antibody test. We also reserve the nasal swab test to patients with more recent symptoms whereby the IgM antibody might be too low to detect.

### **Will there be a shortage?**

It is difficult to predict but our guess is that eventually these tests will run low across the country. States that react quickly to procure these tests around their high population cities will likely have higher success rates at getting positive individuals out of circulation thus slowing the spread as well as re-opening or economy sooner.

### **Have other countries utilized this test?**

In February countries such as Germany and Iceland utilized mass testing on all of their population and serum antibody testing was one of the methods used to roll out their plan. According to a New York Times article Germany especially was well below the rest of the trend across Europe because of their advanced testing.

**At StarMed we are constantly reading and adapting as new information is made available.**

**We will continue to work hard for our patients and community to slow the spread and help get our country back to normalcy as soon as possible.**