Frequently Asked Questions About Rhode Island COVID-19 Testing

Updated July 27, 2020
Introduction:

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is sharing these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to help answer common inquiries about how to get tested for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

This document is organized into four sections about COVID-19 testing:

1) General Information (pages 3 – 5)
2) Results (pages 5 – 8)
3) Serology (Antibody) (pages 8 – 9)
4) Travel Information (pages 9 – 14)

Find easy-to-reference COVID-19 testing information on health.ri.gov:

- COVID-19 Testing for the General Public
- Testing for Rhode Islanders without COVID-19 Symptoms
- COVID-19 Serology (Antibody) Testing
- Rhode Island COVID-19 Travel Information

If you have additional questions or would like to speak with an interpreter who speaks your language, please visit our website at health.ri.gov/covid/testing or call the COVID-19 hotline at 401-222-8022 on weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. or 2-1-1 on weekends and after hours.
General Information

1. Why is COVID-19 testing important in preventing the spread of the virus?
   - Rhode Island’s COVID-19 disease surveillance is a three-part, complete plan to create and expand testing in the state. This surveillance is important in determining how many Rhode Islanders may have COVID-19, helping the state to improve guidelines for businesses and industries, and prevent the spread of the virus.
   - Testing is one part of the state’s work to fight COVID-19. It is still very important for everyone to wear face masks or cloth face covers, wash their hands often, keep distance between themselves and others, and clean surfaces frequently.

2. Who should get tested for COVID-19?
   - Rhode Islanders who have any COVID-19 symptoms.
     If you are experiencing any symptoms the CDC has identified for COVID-19, you will need to get tested.
   - Rhode Islanders who do not have COVID-19 symptoms (also called asymptomatic testing), including:
     - High-contact workers
     - People who recently attended a large gathering such as a protest or demonstration
     - Rhode Islanders who travel to a place where cases are spiking.
   - Recent out-of-state travelers from states with a COVID-19 positivity rate greater than 5%. RIDOH recommends that people get tested for COVID-19 in their home state, if possible. People visiting Rhode Island from out-of-state can find a place for asymptomatic testing at this link. Learn about Rhode Island’s COVID-19 travel information.
   - Please note: Most testing sites will not test people who do not have an appointment already set up.

3. I heard Governor Raimondo announce asymptomatic COVID-19 testing is available for Rhode Islanders who work in close-contact workplaces. Can you tell me more about that?
   - Testing for people without COVID-19 symptoms (also called asymptomatic testing) helps monitor potential hotspots for the virus.
Asymptomatic testing is available to high-contact workers, including but not limited to:

- Barbers
- Child care workers
- Clergy
- Cosmetologists
- First Responders
- Gym and exercise trainers
- Healthcare professionals
- Personal care services (nail technicians, massage therapists, tattoo artists, estheticians, cosmeticians, manicurists, body piercers, and tanning facility staff)
- Public transit drivers
- Restaurant workers
- People who have recently gone to a large gathering or demonstration

4. What should I do if I have any COVID-19 symptoms?

- If you think you have COVID-19 and feel like you have symptoms, you should first call a primary care provider or a respiratory clinic to talk about your symptoms and get scheduled for a test. Many primary care providers can test their patients on site. You should not go directly to a healthcare facility without calling a healthcare provider first. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, then call 9-1-1.

- To find a respiratory clinic near you, visit RIDOH’s COVID-19 Testing for the General Public webpage.

5. I don’t have any COVID-19 symptoms and I am eligible to get a COVID-19 test. How do I schedule an asymptomatic test?

- You can schedule a test online at portal.ri.gov or call 401-222-8022 weekdays from 8:30 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. or 2-1-1 weekends and after hours. You can ask to connect with an interpreter if needed.

- You can also schedule an asymptomatic test through a community-based testing center by contacting them directly. Contact information for community-based asymptomatic testing locations are listed here.
• There will be no charge associated with asymptomatic testing. People will be tested regardless of their immigration status, and regardless of whether they have health insurance. To learn more, visit RIDOH’s webpage on asymptomatic testing.

6. I don’t have a primary care provider. Does that mean I can’t get tested?
• If you don’t have a primary care provider, you can still get tested for COVID-19. There are places like urgent care centers, community health centers, and community-based clinics across the state that are taking new patients. These healthcare facilities are sometimes called “respiratory clinics.” They offer on-site health evaluations as well as on-site COVID-19 testing. Many offer drive-up and walk-up testing options. Here is a list of these facilities.
• More information about places to get tested is available on the RIDOH website at health.ri.gov/covid/testing.
• Be sure to call first to schedule an appointment. Do not go directly to one of these clinics if you think you have COVID-19. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, then call 9-1-1.

7. I have COVID-19 symptoms and I don’t have transportation. I’ve heard that some cities in Rhode Island have walk-up COVID-19 testing sites. Is this true?
• Yes. There are many walk-up testing sites available for people with any COVID-19 symptoms. For the most up-to-date list of walk-up test sites, please visit RIDOH’s COVID-19 Testing for the General Public webpage and view the list under “If you don’t have transportation.”

8. Can I get tested for COVID-19 if I don’t have health insurance?
• Yes. There are several options to get a free COVID-19 test, regardless of your health insurance or immigration status. Many of these sites offer drive-up and walk-up testing options. When you make an appointment, confirm that the site provides free testing and related services for people without health insurance, regardless of immigration status.

COVID-19 Test Results

9. How long will I have to wait to get the results of my COVID-19 test?
• It might take several days to get your test results. Test result turnaround time varies by testing location. While you are waiting for your test results, stay at home and isolate yourself to avoid spreading your symptoms to others.

• The turnaround time on test results depends on several factors, including the laboratory conducting the testing and the time a specimen is collected and transported to the lab. Test results may be delayed for several reasons. For example, if the specimen is sent to an out-of-state commercial lab, labeled incorrectly, or information is missing, this could delay the processing time. Some delays may also be due to heightened national demand for testing supplies such as reagents.

10. How do I get my COVID-19 test results?

• If you scheduled a test on portal.ri.gov and enrolled in CurrentCare before taking your COVID-19 test, you can get your test results at CurrentCareRI.org.
  o You can also get your test results by visiting Eastside Clinical Laboratory’s patient portal at eastsidelab.com/sonicmyaccess, or by texting “ESCL” to 66349.

• If you scheduled a test at a community-based testing site, you will need to follow their instructions for your test result information.

• If you have any questions about asymptomatic testing, call RIDOH at 401-222-8022, weekdays 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. for help.

11. What happens if I have any COVID-19 symptoms and test positive?

• Your name and contact information will be shared with public health staff at the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to help with case investigation.

• Someone from the Department of Health will call you and ask you for a list of people you have had close contact with during your infectious period.

• Stay at home, wash your hands frequently, wear a face mask (or a cloth face covering if a mask is not available), stay away from other people in your home, and clean “high-touch” surfaces (doorknobs, railings, phones, counters, faucet handles) every day.

• Refer to the Department of Health website for information about when you can leave your home.

• If any of your symptoms get worse, call your healthcare provider.
12. Can someone receive a false negative test result if it is taken too early?

- Yes, it is possible. Someone may test negative if the sample was collected early into the infection and then test positive later during the illness.
- See the Test for Current Infection webpage from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

13. What happens if I never had any COVID-19 symptoms, get an asymptomatic test, and test positive for COVID-19?

- Your name and contact information will be shared with public health staff at RIDOH to help with case investigation.
- If you tested positive for COVID-19 and never had symptoms, you must isolate for 10 days from the date of your positive test.

14. What happens if I never had any COVID-19 symptoms, get a COVID-19 test, and test negative?

- If you start having any symptoms of COVID-19 after the test, call your healthcare provider and ask if you should be tested again.
- Wash your hands often and practice social distancing (six feet between you and other people).
- Wear a cloth face covering when you leave your house.
- If you are sick, stay home from work.
- Clean “high-touch” surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, railings, phones, counters, faucet handles) every day.
- If you test negative for COVID-19, you most likely were not infected at the time of your test. It is also possible that you were tested very early in your infection and you could test positive later. Or you could be exposed later and get sick. This means that even with a negative test,
it is important for healthcare workers and others who work with vulnerable populations to stay home from work while experiencing any symptoms.

Serology (Antibody) Testing

15. What are serology (antibody) tests?

- A serology test, or antibody test, is one way to learn how a disease affects a community. These tests involve testing participants' blood for antibodies, special proteins produced in response to an infection. A sample of blood as well as an individual's participation in a survey can help us better understand COVID-19, including how the body responds to the virus, how often the virus causes an infection with symptoms, frequency of specific symptoms, and risk factors for disease.
- Antibody tests can also help us estimate how many people may have already been infected with the virus. Additionally, the information we learn could help in the development of treatments, vaccines, and other prevention tools.

16. Are serology tests being done in Rhode Island?

- Serology tests are available to Rhode Islanders through participating primary care providers or respiratory clinics. Talk with a provider to learn more.
- In mid-July 2020, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) began conducting a serologic survey program, or serosurvey (i.e., antibody study), to learn more about SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and its impact on our communities. This program is a collaboration of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Department of Health and Human Services.
- This volunteer opportunity is offered to first responders (Fire, EMS, police), Rhode Island National Guard (RING) members, RIDOH employees, correctional facility workers, and hospital and nursing home staff.

17. What are antibodies?

- Antibodies are special proteins that the body makes to help fight off infections. They are made in response to an infection. They can be produced even if a person has few or no symptoms. It generally takes some time after an infection for antibodies to be produced and
become detectable in blood. Antibodies are generally detectable after a person has recovered from the infection.

- Sometimes antibodies protect us from getting the same infection again; however, we do not know whether this is true for COVID-19. We also do not yet know how quickly antibodies are produced when someone has COVID-19 or about likely differences in the amount and type of antibodies people produce in response to infection. Antibodies are only part of the complex immune system in our bodies that works to fight off infections.

18. Are antibody tests effective?

- These tests are important for public health; however, they are difficult to interpret for personal health. A positive or negative antibody test should not change a person’s efforts to prevent COVID-19, and test results should not be used to decide whether or not you go to work.
- Continue to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by continuing to wear appropriate protection at your workplace, clean your hands often, wear face coverings, and maintain six feet of physical distance when possible.

COVID-19 Travel Information

19. Why is Rhode Island requiring these travel restrictions for any person coming to Rhode Island for a non-work-related purposes from a location with a high community spread?

- The purpose of these restrictions is to allow time for travelers from locations with high community spread to start quarantining and self-monitor for symptoms during the 14 days that COVID-19 can develop after exposure, and to prevent hundreds of people in the public from being unknowingly exposed, including tourists.
- RIDOH recommends that people get tested for COVID-19 in their home state, if possible. People visiting Rhode Island from out-of-state can find a place for asymptomatic testing on the RIDOH COVID-19 travel information webpage.
- See up-to-date information on Rhode Island’s COVID-19 Travel Information webpage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I plan to visit Rhode Island for vacation. What are Rhode Island’s requirements for travel at this time?</td>
<td>If you are coming to Rhode Island from one of the states listed <a href="#">here</a> with a positivity rate of COVID-19 greater than 5%, you are required to self-quarantine for 14 days while in Rhode Island. <strong>Quarantining for 14 days is always preferred</strong> over relying on a negative test result as quarantining is the best way to limit the possibility of spreading COVID-19. As an exception, you may provide proof of a negative test for COVID-19 that was taken within <strong>72 hours prior to arrival</strong> in Rhode Island. If you receive a test during your quarantine in Rhode Island and get a negative test result, you can stop quarantining. However, you still need to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days, wear a mask in public, and follow physical distancing guidelines. You also must quarantine while waiting for a negative test result.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I plan to move to Rhode Island for the short-term. What are Rhode Island’s requirements for travel at this time?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I plan to move to Rhode Island. What are Rhode Island’s requirements for travel at this time?</td>
<td>No, negative antibody tests are not acceptable. You must have a nasopharyngeal (NP) specimen collected by a healthcare provider and provide proof of a negative test result within <strong>72 hours prior to entering Rhode Island</strong>. RIDOH recommends that people get tested for COVID-19 in their home state, if possible, before arrival to Rhode Island. As an exception, you may provide proof of a negative test for COVID-19 that was taken within <strong>72 hours prior to arrival</strong> in Rhode Island. If you receive a test during your quarantine in Rhode Island and get a negative test result, you can stop quarantining. There is a list of clinics that are testing out-of-state travelers on Rhode Island’s COVID-19 Travel Information <a href="#">webpage</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to use a recent serology (antibody) test to prove that I am COVID-19 negative. Can I do that?</td>
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<tr>
<td>I don’t want to quarantine when I come to Rhode Island. Where can I get an asymptomatic test?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do I do if I get an asymptomatic test in my home state and the test results haven’t come back in time for me to provide negative test results upon my stay in Rhode Island?</td>
<td><strong>Quarantining for 14 days is always preferred</strong> over relying on a negative test result as quarantining is the best way to limit the possibility of spreading COVID-19.</td>
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<td>Who is exempt from these quarantine and testing requirements?</td>
<td>These self-quarantining and testing requirements do not apply to public health, public safety, or healthcare workers, people traveling for medical treatment, to attend funeral or memorial services, to obtain necessities such as groceries, gas or medication, to drop off or pick up children from day care, summer camps, or to anyone who must work on their boats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do I show my negative test results to when I arrive in Rhode Island?</td>
<td>Please complete this certificate of compliance with out-of-state travel quarantine/testing requirements upon arriving in Rhode Island and complete this out-of-state travel screening form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a negative asymptomatic test result sufficient if it was conducted within 96 hours upon entry to Rhode Island.</td>
<td>No, travelers from a negative asymptomatic test result must be within 72 hours prior to arrival in Rhode Island. As an exception, you may provide proof of a negative test for COVID-19 that was taken within 72 hours prior to arrival in Rhode Island. If you receive a test during your quarantine in Rhode Island and get a negative test result, you can stop quarantining. However, you still need to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days, wear a mask in public, and follow social distancing guidelines. You also must quarantine while waiting for a negative test result.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do children have to quarantine or get an asymptomatic test if they are coming to Rhode Island from one of the states listed here with a positivity rate of COVID-19 greater than 5%?</td>
<td>Yes, children have to quarantine or get an asymptomatic test if they are coming to Rhode Island from one of the states listed here with a positivity rate of COVID-19 greater than 5%. Quarantining for 14 days is always preferred over relying on a negative test result as quarantining is the best way to limit the possibility of spreading COVID-19.</td>
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<td>There is a list of clinics that are testing out-of-state travelers at</td>
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<tr>
<td>However, you still need to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14</td>
<td>However, you still need to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days, wear a mask in public, and follow social distancing guidelines. You also must quarantine while waiting for a negative test result.</td>
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<td>You also must quarantine while waiting for a negative test result.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The costs associated with asymptomatic tests will vary by testing site</td>
<td>The costs associated with asymptomatic tests will vary by testing site and may include an appointment fee as well as the cost of the test if you are asymptomatic at the time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhode Island is not offering free testing to out-of-state travelers at</td>
<td>Rhode Island is not offering free testing to out-of-state travelers at this time. The individual being tested or their insurance would be billed for the testing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travelers are encouraged to call a participating testing site to learn</td>
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<td>more.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>See up-to-date information:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there locations in Rhode Island where I can get a rapid asymptomatic test?</td>
<td>Are there locations in Rhode Island where I can get a rapid asymptomatic test? Rapid testing is not available in Rhode Island. If you do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and you would like to get a rapid test, it is recommended that you get access to this testing from your state of origin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How long will it take for my asymptomatic test results?</td>
<td>It might take several days to receive test results. You also must quarantine while waiting for a negative test result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will Rhode Island enforce the 14-day self-quarantine and 72-hour</td>
<td>RIDOH and the Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation will work closely with local businesses to communicate the State’s <a href="https://health.ri.gov/covid/travel/">14-day self-quarantine</a> and 72-hour asymptomatic testing requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asymptomatic testing requirements for out-of-state travelers?</td>
<td>Business such as lodging, campgrounds, seasonal rentals, and other commercial lodging (e.g., Airbnb) will ask travelers to furnish proof of</td>
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- a Certificate of Compliance and negative test result upon request.

Please complete this certificate of compliance with out-of-state travel quarantine/testing requirements upon arriving in Rhode Island and complete this out-of-state travel screening form.

See up-to-date information: https://health.ri.gov/covid/travel/

<p>| Rhode Island Resident Who Traveled to A State within the Last 14 Days with a Positivity Rate of COVID-19 Greater Than 5% |
|---|---|
| Scenarios | Public Health Guidance |
| Do I have to quarantine when I return from a state within the last 14 days with a positivity rate of COVID-19 greater than 5%? | If you are coming to Rhode Island from one of the states listed here with a positivity rate of COVID-19 greater than 5%, you are required to self-quarantine for 14 days while in Rhode Island. |
| | Quarantining for 14 days is always preferred over relying on a negative test result as quarantining is the best way to limit the possibility of spreading COVID-19. |
| | As an exception, you may provide proof of a negative test for COVID-19. If you receive a test during your quarantine in Rhode Island and get a negative test result, you can stop quarantining. |
| | However, you still need to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days, wear a mask in public, and follow social distancing guidelines. You also must quarantine while waiting for a negative test result. |
| Can I get a test instead of quarantining? | Yes, as a Rhode Island resident, you can schedule an asymptomatic test at portal.ri.gov. |
| How long will it take for my asymptomatic test results? | It might take several days to receive test results. You also must quarantine while waiting for a negative test result. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Public Health Guidance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the travel requirements?</td>
<td>If you are coming to Rhode Island from outside the United States, you will need to self-quarantine for 14 days after arriving in Rhode Island. Per CDC recommendations and Rhode Island Executive Order, those returning from international travel must quarantine for 14 days after arriving in Rhode Island.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I have to quarantine, even if I am a Rhode Island resident?</td>
<td>Yes, you must quarantine for 14 days when you return home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I get an asymptomatic test instead of quarantine after returning from international travel?</td>
<td>No, you must quarantine for 14 days when you return home. Testing is not a substitute for quarantine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>