COVID-19 TESTING
Knowing the Difference Between Antigen vs. PCR

**Antigen Testing**
An antigen is any substance your body does not recognize that triggers it to produce an immune response

- Description

looks for specific proteins on the virus’s surface

- How it Works

Nasal swab – just inside the nose

- Test

Called a “rapid” test results delivered in four hours or less

- Speed

Very accurate positive results. Small chance for a “false negative” – past the sixth day of symptoms, this test is less able to find evidence of the virus.

- Accuracy

- When to Choose

- Symptoms for five days or less
- Need fast results
- Prefers less invasive swab

- Symptoms longer than six day
- To confirm results from a previous test
- Need “the gold standard” for accuracy

**PCR Testing**
It’s a molecular test using a lab technique called polymerase chain reaction.

- Description

Detects the virus’s genetic material

- How it Works

Nasopharyngeal swab – farther back in the nose

- Test

Results delivered in one to two days

- Speed

Considered the gold standard for accuracy. So sensitive it can find pieces of the virus long after symptoms are gone and the person is no longer contagious.

- Accuracy