TESTING

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. **What is COVID-19?**
   COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease caused by the Coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. Most people infected by the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness without the need for special treatment. Older people and those who are immunocompromised, especially those with underlying medical issues like Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, Chronic Respiratory Disease, and Cancer, are more likely to develop a more serious illness. Please visit the CDC website for more info: [Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) | CDC](#)

2. **What are the common symptoms of COVID-19?**

Most common	Less common	More severe
Fever > 100.4 F or 38 C Dry cough Fatigue	Aches & Pains Sore throat Diarrhea Loss of taste/smell Conjunctivitis Headache	Difficulty breathing Shortness of breath Chest pain or pressure Loss of speech or movement

   Seek immediate medical attention if you have any serious symptoms. Always call before visiting your doctor or health facility. People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should manage their symptoms at home.

   On average, it takes 5–6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days.

3. **How long does it take to get over COVID-19?**
   Most individuals with mild symptoms get over COVID within 10-14 days. Others can be affected for a bit longer. The severity of the symptoms and pre-existing conditions can dictate recovery time.

4. **If I get COVID-19, can I get it again? Will the COVID-19 Vaccine prevent infection?**
   The hope is that if you get infected to COVID-19 once, your body will build up immunity to it. However, we do not know enough about COVID-19 yet to definitively say. Viruses often mutate and change, then reinfect, so it is possible that you could get COVID-19 again, but less likely than someone who has never had it and, therefore, has not built-up any immunity to it.

With the COVID-19 vaccination, you are less likely to suffer severe disease and hospitalization from COVID-19, but it does not prevent you from being reinfected. Much like the flu virus (influenza), we are never "fully immune" because there are so many variant/mutant strains of the virus. This is why we receive an annual booster vaccine for the influenza virus ("Flu Shot"), and we do not get as sick as we would if we were not vaccinated.

5. **Who is most at risk of experiencing serious complications of COVID-19?**
Anybody with underlying medical diseases like Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, Respiratory Illnesses, Cancers, and other immunocompromised patients. The elderly are thought to be more likely to have serious medical complications due to COVID-19.

6. **What can I do to prevent the spread of COVID-19?**
Practice social distancing (stay at least 6 feet from others in public spaces), wash your hands often and use sanitizer, wear a mask when in public or around other individuals, and stay home as much as possible until the spread of COVID-19 is better controlled. If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, you should be tested and avoid other people as much as possible. **Get tested. More than 50% of those suspected to have COVID-19 are asymptomatic (meaning they have no symptoms but were exposed to someone with symptoms or who have COVID-19). You should always get tested to find out if you have COVID-19, whenever possible.**

7. **Our advantages over other practices for COVID-19 testing are as follows:**
   - **We offer same day appointments and testing** (no waiting for appointments)
   - **We provide the two most accepted and requested types of RAPID tests (Antigen and RT-PCR)**
     - **Both tests result on our patient portal within 60 minutes where you can download and print the test results**
   - We do not run out of testing supply so you will be able to test with us and not wait
   - We conduct testing curbside, so you are safe within the confines of your vehicle. You are not exposed to a waiting room environment where you may get COVID-19 or may spread it to someone else (South End tests inside, however the room is well ventilated and you should not be in there more than a few minutes)

- Our testing staff consists nurses, pharmacists, and trained personnel that have been testing for and treating patients with COVID-19 on the front lines since early 2020
- **Our tests are FDA-approved under the EUA for COVID-19**
- **Our testing sites are CLIA-certified**
- **You can download test results online which have all of the pertinent information needed to turn in to employers, clients, and for travel AND they all include a QR code, which is required for travel to many countries**
- **We offer FREE travel assistance for COVID-19 testing. Simply complete this form and/or email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com with your inquiry**

8. **What is the difference between a rapid antigen and a rapid RT-PCR test?**

   There are many differences between the two tests. See below:

   Terminology:
   - Rapid: results in a short amount of time (usually < 60 minutes)
   - RT-PCR: Reverse Transcriptase - Polymerase Chain Reaction

   A **rapid antigen** diagnostic test detects specific proteins on the surface of the Coronavirus. These tests generally provide a result within an hour (10 minutes for us), and are highly specific, meaning if you test positive you are very likely to be infected (100%). However, there is a higher chance of false negatives with antigen tests due to testing being done before the virus can build up detectable levels. Therefore, there is a chance of false negatives if testing is conducted too early (generally considered less than 5 days post-exposure). Some rapid tests are prone to more false negatives than others. Our particular test: **CareSmart is one of the top rapid antigen tests on the market with a 88.4% sensitivity and 100% specificity. In practice, we have seen very few false negatives however we cannot officially give any percentages.**

   A RT-PCR or PCR test is also known as a molecular/viral test. It detects the presence of viral genetic material using the process of reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction or PCR. This test is typically collected with a nasal swab or saliva, sent to a lab, where the Coronavirus RNA (if present) is converted to DNA and then amplified to produce enough viral DNA to be detected. This test is highly accurate, so a positive or negative result is very reliable, however it can take days to a week to get the results. **Our RAPID PCR test results in 30-60 minutes and is the GOLD STANDARD of testing. It is accepted worldwide and is our most recommended test**

See table on the following page for a side-by-side comparison of both tests!

	Rapid Antigen	**RECOMMENDED** Rapid RT-PCR
Other common names	diagnostic test	NAAT; molecular / RT-PCR / real-time polymerase chain reaction
Type of test	antigen	molecular
Results in	10 minutes	Within 30-60 minutes
Typically used for	Fast confirmation of infection with COVID-19; negative result does not rule out infection.	**Gold Standard** of testing for infection with COVID-19.
	Used to confirm **active infection.**	Used to confirm **active infection** & useful for **travel.**
Cost	$79	$190
How to choose?	Cheaper and Fastest	Most Accurate with Fastest Turnaround Time
	Chance of obtaining a false negative result	**Best option for accuracy of infection & accepted WORLDWIDE for travel**
Specificity / PPA	100%	100%
Sensitivity / NPA	88.4%	95.3%
When to get tested?	5 days after known exposure *the NAAT and RT PCR *may* detect positives sooner (not recommended)*	
FDA approval	All approved by FDA under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).	
CLIA certification	All three tests are CLIA-certified.	
Our testing recommendation	We highly recommend the **Rapid RT-PCR** test due to its *high testing accuracy* and *fast turn around time*.	

For travel planning assistance:
🌐 https://carolinapharmacy.com/travel-testing-assistance
✉ covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com

9. **What test does Carolina Pharmacy recommend for COVID-19 testing?**
   We recommend the **RT-PCR**
   Here are a few reasons why:
   - You will have your results in roughly 30-60 minutes
   - This test is more accurate than the rapid antigen and other tests
     - Much less false negatives and positives (see table above)
   - It is the GOLD STANDARD of COVID-19 testing
   - It is accepted worldwide for travel and has a QR code
   - Most employers require this type of test result
   - You have the option to include personal passport and/or driver's license information on your results page
   - Most countries require this test for entry
   - Airlines will always accept this test

10. **Who do I contact if I have any other questions about COVID-19 and Testing?**
    You may ask your tester at the testing site or you may email us at covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com and we will respond within the hour, tops!

11. **Help! I am traveling and have no idea what test my airline/destination requires. Can you help me?**
    Absolutely! We love to help! Everyone is traveling to different countries around the world via different ports of entry. It is easiest if you simply complete this **form** or email us and let us take the stress out of traveling and COVID-19 testing for you.
    Countries are changing entry requirements daily so let our expert travel testing team help you! It is always recommended that you do your due diligence in researching as well.

    Complete this form or email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com with your inquiry and be sure to include:
    Your travel destination, your travel/flight date and time, what airline(s) you are travelling with or if you are driving yourself, and vaccination status.

12. **If I was exposed to someone with symptoms of COVID-19 or had a confirmed positive for COVID-19, how long should I wait before being tested?**
    It is recommended to wait at least 5 days after a known exposure to someone believed to be or known to be positive for COVID-19. The reason you wait 5 days is for the virus to build up enough of a detectable load for testing. If you test before this time, it is likely for you to react with a negative test, when you are actually positive (false negative). The rapid antigen test requires 5 days of incubation time to detect a true positive result,

however the PCR test can detect a positive as early as 24 hours post-exposure/ infection. We do still recommend you wait a few more days to ensure optimal accuracy. If you do not know when you were exposed or by whom, you can test with us. If you ever have symptoms, you can test immediately as well.

13. **How many days after exposure can a molecular test detect a positive COVID-19 infection?**
The general recommendation is to wait 5 days after exposure to get tested for COVID-19. That is not to say our molecular tests cannot detect an active infection earlier than 5 days of exposure. We have had positives on the PCR test in as little as 24-hours. However, testing is not perfect and there are always certain variables that can affect results - positive or negative. They are uncommon but can occur. Always practice social distancing, wear a mask, and use good hygiene practices, especially when around other people.

For specific questions, please e-mail covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com

14. **What type of PCR test do you and your lab use?**

We utilize the Accula and Visby RT-PCR tests.

15. **Are your rapid tests FDA-approved?**

Yes, our CareStart Rapid Antigen, Visby/Accula RT-PCR COVID-19 tests are approved by the FDA Emergency Use Authorization. Our tests, used for detection of SARS-CoV-2 Antigen/Viral RNA, are Point of Care Tests intended for the qualitative detection of viral constituents from SARS-CoV-2 in nasopharyngeal, nasal, or oral swab specimens (dependent on test and swab time utilized).

These tests can only be administered by a licensed healthcare professional working within a facility with a valid CLIA certificate.

	CareStart Rapid Antigen - Access Bio	**Visby Rapid Molecular RT-PCR**
FDA Letter of Authorization	CareStart™ COVID-19 Antigen - Letter of Authorization (fda.gov)	Visby Medical COVID-19 Point of Care Test - Letter of Authorization (fda.gov)
Fact Sheet for Patients	https://www.fda.gov/media/142918/download	https://www.fda.gov/media/142227/download

Package Insert (Instructions for Use or IFU)	https://www.fda.gov/media/142919/download	Health Care Provider Fact Sheet - Visby Medical COVID-19 (fda.gov)

16. **Are COVID-19 tests always 100% accurate? Is there a certain level of error that may contribute to my test being inaccurate?**
COVID tests are as accurate as the specifications authorized by the FDA. A RT-PCR test is the gold standard for COVID testing and is the most accurate COVID test available on the mark. We source only the best COVID tests available to us. There are several external factors that may impact a COVID test result for instance; quality of the sample collected, how many days post exposure you are testing, the detectable levels of virus present when being tested which is referred to as the "viral load". In any testing scenario, there is a possibility for human error or cross contamination to occur. Since many would like to place an exact accuracy rate on tests, the RT-PCR test is essentially 95-99% accurate and any error can be attributed to the external factors listed above. Our antigen test is 88% accurate and provides a 100% accurate result for positive samples and does not provide "false positives".

For negative antigen test results there is about a 12% chance that you may actually be positive. Due to the nature of false negatives with antigen tests it is recommended to follow up all negative test results with a RT-PCR test to rule out a false negative. RT-PCR tests are the most accurate tests on the market and are as near to 100% accuracy with regard to positive and negative results, as you can get.

17. <mark>**Will my RT-PCR Test result positive due to a previous COVID-19 infection?**</mark>
Theoretically, yes, a RT-PCR test may result positive as a false positive for 3-6 months after infection. Most RT-PCR tests are extremely sensitive and can pick up dead fragments of the virus in our body for up to 3-6 months following infection but this is not the case for everyone.

Practically speaking, especially with our RT-PCR test, we generally do ot see false positives after 28 days of infection.

Results may vary and if you have any specific testing questions, please email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com for a personalized solution.

18. **How long does it take to get the results back from your rapid antigen test?**
10-15 minutes. Sometimes, we are slightly backed up due to the high demand on COVID-19 testing but we will make every effort to get to you on time and tested as soon as possible.

19. **How long does it take to get the results back for your RT-PCR test?**
RT-PCR results will be available on our patient portal within 60 minutes.

20. Where do I access my RT-PCR test results?
You receive access to your result for a RT-PCR test in two ways:

1. We send you an email confirmation when you book your test which includes instructions on how to register for our patient portal. You will receive these instructions again in person once you complete testing in the form of a flyer

   To access your itemized receipt and test results:
   - Login to the patient portal and you will be able to download a PDF version of the itemized receipt
   - https://app.rcscheduling.com/clinicare
   - Appointment ID (available in your email confirmation)
   - Last Name

2. You can email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com and include your full name and date of birth

21. My travel destination requires a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT) from a certified Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) lab test results from TRUSTED TESTING AND TRAVEL PARTNERS. Do you offer this test?
Yes. Our RT-PCR test is a molecular test that is a form of NAAT. Other names for molecular tests you may see are diagnostic test, viral test, nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT), PCR test.

22. What laboratory performs your RT-PCR test?
We used to partner with another local lab for PCR testing, however we now have the ability to process our own RT-PCR tests in a much shorter and more convenient and reasonable time frame for our patients (60 mins or less).

23. What is the Lab certificate/license number for my molecular RT-PCR test?
RT-PCR - Your result page will have the CLIA number on this page

Everyone that has traveled and tested with us has simply presented their results page to airlines to satisfy their requirements for travel.
Example Results Page with CLIA number, Tax ID and lab information:

RT-PCR:

Clinicare

Patient Information

Doe, Jack

Date of Birth: 11/04/1978
Gender: Male
Phone: 5556187299
Address: 555 Blair Road
Charlotte   Mecklenburg
North Carolina   28218
USA
Diagnosis Codes: Z03.818
CPT/Procedure Code: 87635

Test Information: SARS-CoV-2 (RT-PCR)
Specimen Source: Nasopharyngeal

Clinician: Dr. John Smith
Collected: 09/13/2021 13:00
Resulted: 09/13/2021 13:58

	RESULT	(Abnormal)	FLAG	UOM	REFERENCE RANGE
SARS-CoV-2 (RT-PCR)	Negative				

This patient was tested using a fully-integrated device containing a reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) based assay for qualitative detection of viral RNA from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The device automatically performs all steps required to complete lysis, reverse transcription, polymerase chain reaction, and amplification detection (NAAT). The test is a molecular diagnostic test kit for the qualitative detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from upper respiratory specimens in individuals with known or suspected COVID-19. A negative result does not exclude infection caused by SARS-CoV-2 and the results must be correlated with clinical presentation and evaluated in the context of other laboratory and epidemiologic data. A positive result indicates it is very likely you have COVID-19 and it is important to be under the care of a healthcare provider.

The COVID-19 RT-PCR test is a Laboratory Developed test (LDT) that has not been FDA cleared or approved; it has been authorized by FDA under an EUA for use by authorized laboratories. This test has been authorized only for the detection of nucleic acid from SARS-CoV-2, not for any other viruses or pathogens. The COVID-19 RT-PCR test is only authorized for the duration of the declaration that circumstances exist justifying the authorization of emergency use of in vitro diagnostics for detection and/or diagnosis of COVID-19 under Section 564(b)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3(b)(1), unless the authorization is terminated or revoked sooner.

Vehicle Type: GMC Suburban
Passport #: CN383930
Passport Exp: 10/05/2024
DL State and Number: NC 39349330
DL Exp: 12/04/2025

Test Performed At:
Walker's Drug Store Cotswold
4390 Colwick Road
Charlotte, NC 28211
CLIA: 34D2184399
TAX ID: 85-4187213

** FINAL REPORT **

Rapid Antigen:

Clinicare

Test Information: SARS-CoV-2 COVID-Ag (Antigen)
Specimen Source: Nasal/Nasopharyngeal

Patient Information

Doe, Jill

Date of Birth: 11/13/1977
Gender: Female
Phone: 5554353981
Address: 555 Clarett Street
Rock Hill
SC   29127
USA

Parent or Guardian:
Race: White
Ethnic Origin: Non-Hispanic

Is patient symptomatic with this disease:
If yes, symptom onset date:
Symptoms:

Diagnosis Codes: Z03.818
CPT/Procedure Code: 87426

Clinician: Dr. John Smith
Collected: 10/19/2021 12:45
Resulted: 10/19/2021 13:02

	RESULT	(Abnormal)	FLAG	UOM	REFERENCE RANGE
SARS-CoV-2 COVID-Ag (Antigen)	Negative				

The Patient was tested with a COVID-19 Antigen Test. This test is a lateral flow immunochromatographic assay intended for the qualitative detection of the nucleocapsid protein antigen from SARS-CoV-2 in nasopharyngeal or anterior nasal swab specimens directly collected from individuals who are either suspected of COVID-19 by their healthcare provider within the first five days of symptom onset or from individuals without symptoms or other epidemiological reasons to suspect COVID-19 when tested twice over two or three days with at least 24 hours and no more than 48 hours between tests

The CareStart™ COVID-19 Ag Test has not been FDA cleared or approved; it has been authorized by the FDA under an emergency use authorization for use by authorized entities. The test has been authorized only for the detection of proteins from SARS-CoV-2, not for any other viruses or pathogens, and is only authorized for the duration of the declaration that circumstances exist justifying the authorization of emergency use of in vitro diagnostic tests for detection and/or diagnosis of COVID-19 under Section 564(b)(1) of the Act, 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3(b)(1), unless the authorization is terminated or revoked sooner.

Vehicle Type: White Lexus IS200
Passport #: JK329393
Passport Exp: 10/05/2024
DL State and Number: SC 10272855
DL Exp: 04/04/2025

Test Performed At:
Carolina Pharmacy Rock Hill
725 Cherry Road, Suite 103
Rock Hill, SC 29732
CLIA: 42D2187788
TAX ID: 85-4187213

** FINAL REPORT **

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24. **I had a PCR test done and the result posted says "inconclusive." What does this mean and do I need to be retested?**
You will no longer get an inconclusive test result with our new rapid RT-PCR test.

25. **Can I reschedule my appointment?**
To **change the date and/or time** of your test, simply click the "Reschedule Appointment" tab within your e-mail confirmation and you can choose a new date and time. You will be sent an updated date/time and so will our testing site.

To **change the testing site**, you will need to e-mail covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com. We will get to your response within the hour. You can always just go to your preferred testing site and let them know of the issue and they will get the test location and form corrected for you.

26. **What if I booked my test for the wrong testing site or I want to switch my reservation to another testing site?**
In either one of these situations, you just need to email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com. We will respond to you within the hour to quickly reschedule your location. Please let us know your full name, date and time of reservation, where you booked your testing, what date/time you want to reschedule, and your preferred testing site. If you are too close to your testing time, simply go to the preferred testing site and they will be able to help reschedule you on the spot.

27. **May I book a COVID-19 test and request a refund later? What is your refund policy?**
Unfortunately, once you book a test, it becomes non-refundable. We make that very clear before you submit payment by requesting you to check a box and acknowledging the refund policy. We have many steps that involve multiple people behind the scenes to get ready for testing including paper transcription of forms, preparing tests, reviewing the information on the forms for completion, and reserving the test time specifically for you. Please only book a test if you are sure you want to be tested. Email us if you need to discuss your reason for refund. Trip cancellations are out of our control and we prefer you simply reschedule for a future date/trip.

__Exception:__
If you want to change the test type you selected to another test, you need to rebook the correct test, and email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com about the switch. We will gladly refund the incorrect test to you. It may take 2-6 days for the refund to process on your end depending on your credit card or bank.

28. What do I do if I booked the wrong test (antigen instead of PCR, or vice versa)?
If you chose the wrong test when booking, simply rebook for the correct test and let someone at the testing site know. Alternatively, you could email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com and we will refund your incorrectly-booked test once you rebook for the correct test. Refunds will be processed within 36 hours and generally take 2-6 business days depending on your credit card processor.

29. Do you take HSA/FSA for COVID-19 testing?
Yes! Our COVID testing platform at www.carolinapharmacy.com takes all valid Health Savings Account (HSA) and Flexible Spending Account (FSA) cards. If payment does not go through when trying to use your HSA or FSA card, call your card processor to troubleshoot the issue.

30. What info do I need to submit a claim for reimbursement to my insurance for a COVID-19 test?
This generally depends on your insurance provider and it is your sole responsibility to contact your insurance provider and ensure they will reimburse you for a COVID test before you get tested at Carolina Pharmacy. We have yet to have any patients who have not been reimbursed but just make sure you do your due diligence to ensure your insurance will reimburse you.

All of the information you need to submit to insurance for reimbursement is accessible via the patient portal (alongside your test results) in a downloadable PDF itemized receipt. Please check your email inbox, junk and spam for your email confirmation which has the link to the patient portal and the appointment ID, which you need to access your profile within the patient portal. If you did not receive an e-mail, it is likely it was entered wrong on your COVID-19 test submission or your e-mail server blocked the e-mail, which happens from time to time. Simply email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com to get another confirmation e-mail. Be mindful that we get many inquiries and will get in touch with you ASAP, generally within a few minutes.

To access your itemized receipt and test results:

- *Login to the patient portal and you will be able to download a PDF version of the itemized receipt*
    - *https://app.rcscheduling.com/clinicare*
    - *Appointment ID (available in your email confirmation)*
    - *Last Name*

31. Do you offer corporate or group rates for testing?
Absolutely! Email covidtesting@carolinapharmacy.com and we will be happy to provide

your company, group, or personal network with a customized digital flyer to pass around as well as a referral/corporate code to save money on group testing.

32. **Can I use my medical insurance to pay for COVID-19 testing at Carolina Pharmacy?**
Medical insurance *does* generally cover testing for COVID-19. Unfortunately, as a small independent retail pharmacy, we are not capable of billing your medical insurance for COVID-19. We can, however, take HSA or FSA cards, which cover the cost of testing. Alternatively, you may also file a "paper claim" with your insurance and allow them to reimburse you for your out-of-pocket costs for testing. You would need to contact your insurance to see what information they need from you to get reimbursed and how much.

See Questions 29 for more information on how to retrieve your itemized receipt (PDF) which is needed to submit for reimbursement

If you prefer to use your medical insurance to pay for testing at the time of testing, there are urgent cares and medical practices set up around town to help you. We cannot speak on what kind of tests they perform, their accuracy, when results will be available, or other questions you may have. You would need to reach out to them to do that. ***Keep in mind there may be additional administrative fees and copays for testing with them. Make sure you are not left with a bill after testing. Just be mindful and ask questions wherever you test so you are well informed.***

32. **Can your COVID-19 tests detect exactly which strain is causing my positive COVID-19 infection? Can it detect the Delta or Omicron variants?**
Our current COVID-19 tests are able to detect all known strains of COVID-19. Meaning, if you are infected and there are detectable levels, you will test positive with our tests.

However, our current tests do not identify which particular strain is causing the positive test. **That type of detection requires gene sequencing which is only done in high-level labs and can take several days. At present, those labs are only communicating the exact strain information to local government officials and the health department for statistical analysis, not to the patient themselves.**

Delta variant is still the main strain causing COVID-19 infection in the USA as of December 12th, 2021. The Omicron strain has been found in NC (Charlotte) as of December 12th, 2021 and will soon become one of the more common strains to infect our community. As of right now, while more studies are occurring on all tests out there, our tests are able to detect all COVID-19 strains as positive, however, we cannot identify the exact strain (just that you are positively infected).

As we learn more, we will update this page and our testing services in order to best serve our community

33. How do the symptoms of the original COVID-19 virus differ from the Delta and Omicron variant?

Delta Variant:
Based on the most recent research, the CDC has not updated the list of symptoms with any new items specific to the delta variant. However, reports are stating that headaches, running nose, and sore throat may be more common for the delta variant as opposed to the original strain where shortness of breath and loss of taste/smell were more common.

For those who are vaccinated, symptoms are most likely to include headache followed by runny nose and sneezing.

Omicron Variant:
We've seen a sharp increase in cases for the past 10 days. So far, they have mostly been very mild cases, with patients having flu-like symptoms: dry coughs, fever, night sweats, a lot of body pains. It is believed the Omicron Variant is more transmissible but we are still waiting on data to back that claim up.

34. What does a rapid antibody test tell me?
A COVID-19 antibody test tells you if you had a previous infection. Antibodies are created by your immune system after you have been infected with a virus or vaccinated to help prevent future infection. It cannot determine if you have a current COVID-19 infection because it can take 1-3 weeks for your body to create antibodies.

35. What is the difference between IgG and IgM?
IgG and IgM are antibodies produced by your immune system when infected by a virus or vaccination. IgM antibodies are produced as the body's first response to a new infection. The amount of IgM antibodies increase for a few weeks until IgG antibody production begins. IgG antibodies are produced starting 7-10 days after infection and increase in the few weeks following infection. These antibodies remain in your system at a stabilized level to protect you from future infection.

36. Can you tell me if my antibodies are from a prior infection as opposed to a COVID-19 vaccination?
The rapid antibody test has been approved for detection of antibodies from infection, not vaccination. Through practice, the test has been shown to detect antibodies from vaccination as well.*
IgG and IgM presence on the results of your antibody test can indicate the following:

-IgM	-IgG	Never encountered COVID-19, Susceptible to infection

+IgM	-IgG	Early stages of response, possible virus carrier
+IgM	+IgG	Recent infection, suggests immunity
-IgM	+IgG	Past infection, suggests immunity *Antibodies from vaccination

37. How long do antibodies stay present after infection?
Studies have shown that natural antibodies produced after infection can last in the body anywhere from 3-6 months. New studies suggest that antibodies may last as long as 20 months.

38. How long do antibodies stay present after vaccination?
We don't know exactly how long COVID-19 antibodies last for, but recent CDC studies suggest that protection from the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccinations begins to fade around 4 months after booster vaccination.

39. Does any particular vaccine provide better or longer immunity than another?
According to a recent study, the effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine reached a peak of 96% at 2 months and remained around 90% at 7 months. The Moderna vaccine reached a peak of 97% at 2 months and remained at 94% at 7 months. Both vaccinations utilize the same mRNA technology and have had a similar efficacy at preventing disease. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a virus vector, different from the mRNA technology and although more convenient, it only has showed a 67% efficacy in preventing moderate to severe disease.

40. What is the difference between Influenza A and B?
Influenza A viruses have been shown to be the most harmful form of influenza, as it can cause severe disease. It causes seasonal flu epidemics yearly and can infect both humans and animals.

Influenza B almost exclusively infects humans and is less common than Influenza A. It has been shown to cause a less severe reaction but can cause increased infections late in the flu season. Both influenza A and B are contagious and their treatments are the same.

41. How do I know if I need to see my doctor for antiviral medication?
Tamiflu (Oseltamivir) is the most common antiviral treatment for the influenza virus. It is recommended to contact your doctor to see if you are a good candidate for this treatment if it is still within 48 hours of feeling any symptoms.

If you are not a candidate for Tamiflu, it is recommended to drink a lot of fluids and get rest. Tylenol or Motrin is also recommended to help reduce fever.

42. What does the Rapid Antigen (Dual COVID-19 and Flu Test) tell me?
If you are experiencing any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or the flu, the rapid antigen dual test can help you quickly determine which infection is potentially present. It allows healthcare professionals to diagnose and differentiate the respiratory viruses and tailor

treatment as appropriate. If your rapid antigen test comes back positive for COVID-19 we recommend a PCR test to confirm results.

43. Can I still get the flu even though I got a flu vaccine this year?
Yes, it is still possible to contract Influenza A/B even if you have been vaccinated. The following are some scenarios where this would be possible:
- You may have been exposed to the flu shortly before getting the vaccine or the 2 week period of time after vaccination that it takes your body to create antibodies and mount a response
- You may be exposed to a strain or mutation of the flu virus that was not included in this years version of the vaccine.
- Even if neither of those scenarios apply, you can still contract the flu while being vaccinated. The vaccine is to protect against, so it may help lessen your symptoms but you are still able to get it.

44. How do I know if I have the flu or COVID-19?
Some symptoms of the flu and COVID-19 are consistent with each other. Hallmark flu symptoms include fever/chills, muscle/body aches as well as vomiting and diarrhea, which is more common in children than adults.

We recommend our Rapid Antigen Dual Test that can detect both COVID-19 and the flu so you know how to proceed with treatment.

45. How long should I stay home if I test positive for Influenza A/B?
Since the influenza virus is highly contagious, the CDC recommends that persons infected stay home and avoid contact for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone to prevent the spread.

46. Do I have to stay home and quarantine if I test positive for the flu?
Since the influenza virus is highly contagious, the CDC recommends that those who test positive with the flu should stay home until at least 24 hours until their fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications or at least 4-5 days after flu symptoms started.

47. What is Group A Strep?
Group A Strep, more commonly known as Strep throat, is a bacterial infection in the throat and tonsils.

48. How can you get strep throat?
The group A strep bacteria live in the nose and throat and can easily spread to other people by talking, coughing or sneezing. People can get sick if they come into contact with the contagious respiratory droplets including:
- Breathing them in
- Touch something infected and touch their mouth
- Drink from the same glass or eat off the plate of someone infected
- Come into contact or touch strep A sores on the skin

49. How do I know if it is strep throat and not something else like COVID-19 or the flu?
Some classic signs and symptoms of strep throat include:
- Sore throat that comes on quickly
- Pain when swallowing
- Fever
- Red and swollen tonsils that can have white patches/streaks of pus on them
- Small red spots on the roof of the mouth
- Swollen lymph nodes

Signs and symptoms uncommon in strep and may indicate something else include:
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Hoarseness
- Conjunctivitis- watery/itchy eyes
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We recommend that you get tested to determine what disease is making you sick. At Carolina Pharmacy we offer rapid antigen tests for: Strep A, COVID-19, and Influenza A/B.

50. How is strep throat treated?
If you test positive for strep throat, contact your doctor as they can prescribe you antibiotics if necessary. Penicillin or amoxicillin are recommended as first choice for patients that do not have an allergy and can help:
- Decrease length of sickness
- Decrease symptoms and get you feeling better
- Prevent serious complications

51. How can I protect my family from contracting Strep A?
Since strep throat is a contagious virus, the best way to prevent the spread is good hygiene and limiting close contact with others. It is important to follow the following suggestions:
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Do not share drinks or food
- Make sure to wipe down common surfaces as well as glasses, utensils and plates after an infected person uses them

52. Do I have to stay home and quarantine if I have strep throat?
The CDC recommends that people with strep throat should stay home from work, school, daycare, etc. until they no longer have a fever or have been taking antibiotics for at least 12 hours.