



ASSOCIATES IN
FAMILY MEDICINE

VIRAL(PCR) TESTS FOR COVID-19

AFM is working with community partners to be able to provide COVID-19 viral (PCR) testing for symptomatic and asymptomatic patients. AFM is NOT testing on site, but will send patients to the appropriate testing location.

Viral (PCR) tests, usually collected through a nasal swab or saliva sample, check respiratory samples for RNA particles. RNA is the identifier of a virus, like a barcode. Each virus has its own RNA, allowing us to identify what is collected in a sample. This test is not useful in determining past exposure in fully recovered patients. Patients getting tested for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, do not have to be symptomatic to be infected. At this time, any patient who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 is able to get tested.

Asymptomatic testing is only suggested in certain cases of outbreaks or for research purposes for essential workers (healthcare workers, long term care facility staff, first responders, grocery store workers, etc.).

A positive viral (PCR) test detects current infection.

A negative viral (PCR) test likely indicates that a patient was not infected at the time the sample was collected. However, it is possible that test was collected early in infection before the virus was detectable or too long after the onset of infection, when the number of virus particles have declined.

Regardless of a patient's test results, the provider that order the test will follow up with the patient to ensure a proper plan of care is in place.