

TEST TYPES

- There are two types of test:
- Antigen To determine if the donor “has” the virus.
- Antibody To determine if the donor has a specific immune response to “fight” the virus.
- Each type of test can be done in different ways and can also be performed using different sample types. Blood, throat and mouth swabs and saliva are common sample types.




- **Antigen**

- **PCR**

- It is often reported that PCR is the gold standard in detecting the presence of the virus.
- More correctly this test is “Reverse Transcript Polymerase Chain Reaction “or RT-PCR.
- PCR is very specific. A PCR positive is considered to be a true positive, but it cannot determine if the infection is just starting or ending.
- Also, importantly, it cannot determine if the donor is infectious.
- Please remember, infected and infectious mean **two** different things.
- PCR is a lab-based test and uses a machine with a trained operator.
- Other lab-based tests include techniques such as ELISA and LAMP.

- **LFT**

- Lateral Flow Tests, sometimes called POCT, or Point of Collection Tests are not as sensitive as PCR tests.
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THEY HAVE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES.

- LFT's are lower cost, **have** faster result times, BUT because they are less sensitive there is a greater chance of a wrong result.
- What are the wrong results and their consequences?
- With antigen tests, there are two types of incorrect result.

FALSE NEGATIVE RESULTS AND THEIR IMPACT

- **False Negative**
- A person who really had the virus in their body, takes an LFT and is reported “Negative”.
- The consequences of this false negative result depend entirely on the behaviour of the individual.
- In our opinion any negative (True or False) LFT result should not result in a change of behaviour. The donor must consider him/herself still to be a risk and continue social distancing and all other Covid aware protocols. (Hands, Face, Space etc.)
- Lateral Flow Tests best uses are to find asymptomatic positive people.
- More correctly asymptomatic, and pre-symptomatic. People with NO symptoms or people who have still to develop symptoms.

THE IMPACT OF A FALSE POSITIVE

- **False Positive**
- A donor receiving a positive result should self-isolate and make arrangements for a PCR test to be done as confirmation of the presence of the virus.
- If a subsequent PCR test returns a negative result, then the consequences were several days of self isolation that were not required