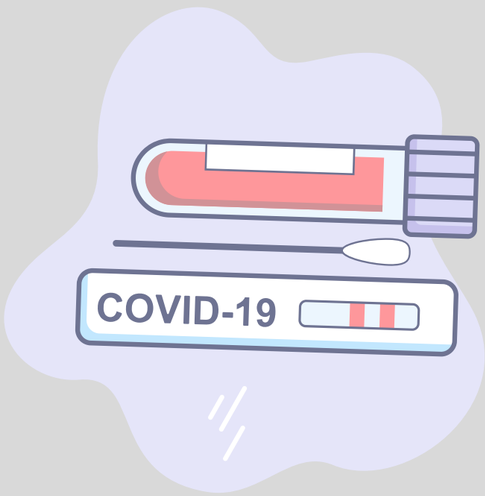
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PCR VS. ANTIGEN TESTING



PCR TESTING

Characteristics:

- **PCR stands for Polymerase Chain Reaction**
- **Detects: viral genetic information**
- **Good sensitivity: amplifies RNA and able to detect small traces**

When to use:

- **Asymptomatic**
- **Early infection (1-2 days before or after symptoms)**
- **Suspected or known exposure**
- **Meets documentation requirements (travel, school, doctor's visit, work)**

ANTIGEN TESTING

Characteristics:

- **Detects: coronavirus protein spikes**
- **Higher sensitivity: if positive, likelihood of positive is high (83%)**
- **Lower sensitivity: requires larger amounts of virus to detect**

When to use:

- **Symptomatic**
- **Test on Day 5 to determine when to end isolation**
- **Positive: continue isolating until after 10 days of exposure**
- **Negative: no longer infectious (end of isolation period)**