

# Video: How testing has kept up with new COVID-19 variants

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While COVID-19 continues to evolve, there is some good news when it comes to detecting the virus.

"The tests we've used over the last three or four years don't seem to be significantly impacted by the new variants," says Dr. Matthew Binnicker, director of the Clinical Virology Laboratory at Mayo Clinic.

He says that the molecular, or PCR, tests processed in laboratories look at multiple parts of the genetic makeup of the [virus](#), so even if there are mutations in one area, a test can still pick up the virus. "And the home antigen tests look for a different protein altogether from where we're seeing these [mutations](#) in the recent variants," says Dr. Binnicker.

So what should you do if you're feeling ill? "I'm recommending that if an individual has symptoms of cough, [sore throat](#) or body aches, that they take a COVID at-home antigen test as a first step. If that's positive, you probably have COVID-19 and should stay home for a period of time until your symptoms resolve," says Dr. Binnicker.

He adds that if the test is negative, consider contacting your care team, "and scheduling a lab-based test that will probably look for flu, RSV and COVID-19. That way, you can get a wider picture of what could be causing your disease."

It's important to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses. Along with testing, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and Dr. Binnicker recommends these strategies:

- Stay up to date on vaccinations.
- Stay home if you are not feeling well.
- If you have any respiratory symptoms, wear a mask if you must go out in public.
- Practice good hand hygiene.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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