



Erie County
Department of
Health



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PRESS RELEASE

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ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO OFFER COVID-19 ANTIBODY TESTS TO ERIE COUNTY RESIDENTS

ERIE COUNTY, NY – Starting Tuesday, May 19, the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) will offer a series of clinics for COVID-19 antibody testing throughout Erie County.

The antibody test conducted by the Erie County Public Health Lab requires a blood draw from the arm. Appointments will be available in half-hour increments at clinics held three days each week from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. These clinics will be set up in locations throughout Erie County, including Amherst, Buffalo, Cheektowaga, Depew, Hamburg, Lackawanna, Orchard Park, Springville and Williamsville.

ECDOH will schedule appointments for Erie County residents ages 11 and older through its COVID-19 Information Line at (716) 858-2929, which is open daily between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Antibody tests for COVID-19 should be done at least 21 days after onset of any COVID-19 symptoms. Those symptoms may include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.

“We have the ability to provide 100,000 antibody tests to our residents, which will start to provide a sense of who has been exposed to COVID-19 in our community,” **said Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz.** “This is a massive effort coordinated by our health department, many other county departments, and partners in our cities and towns, and our thanks go out to them and to the staff and volunteers who will be managing these sites.”

“There are some important distinctions to make about the differences between a diagnostic test for COVID-19, and the antibody tests that we are offering through these clinics,” **said Commissioner of Health Dr. Gale Burstein.** “Antibody tests can indicate past exposure to a disease, but a positive test does not necessarily mean you are immune to a future COVID-19 infection.” **She continued,** “Regardless of your antibody test results, you should continue social distancing, wear a mask when you could be near other people, wash your hands with soap and water often, clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, and minimize the time you spend in public spaces, especially if you are elderly or have a chronic disease.”

Appointments are required and will be scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis for the next three scheduled clinic days. “With our diagnostic test locations, we are seeing a significant number of no-show appointments,” **explained Dr. Burstein.** “By having appointments scheduled within the next week, we hope to reduce those no-shows and maximize the number of people we can test.”

continued

There is no cost for antibody testing through ECDOH. To maintain physical distancing within each test site, only individuals who have a scheduled appointment and their parent or guardian, if under 18 years old, will be allowed into the testing area. Anyone entering the testing site will be required to wear a cloth face covering or other appropriate mask. Antibody test results will be mailed within 7-10 days, and anyone who receives an antibody test through ECDOH is encouraged to speak to their health care provider about their results. Parents should discuss with their child's pediatrician if they are interested in their child under 11 years getting tested for COVID-19 antibodies.

Diagnostic COVID-19 tests where a nasal swab is collected continue to be offered through ECDOH by calling (716) 858-2929. Diagnostic tests are available at this time for individuals who believe they may have been exposed to COVID-19 or if you feel you are at risk.

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- ECDOH, COVID-19 Information Line: (716) 858-2929 – foreign language interpretation is available.
- Erie County Department of Health, COVID-19: www.erie.gov/covid19
- Erie County online map of confirmed cases: www.erie.gov/covidmap
- New York State Department of Health Hotline: (888) 364-3065

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