Lessons Learned After Treating 3,000 COVID-19 Patients

With all the news about antibody testing, I wanted to reach out and help you better understand what antibody testing is, why it's important, and to help you navigate what you need to know. Comprehending the complex topic of immunology as it relates to COVID-19 and your health is not easy, therefore, I wanted to provide simple, useful information for our **CURE** family of patients. We were the first in NYC to offer serum testing (blood drawn from your vein) and we have learned quite a bit of useful information from treating over 3,000 patients, which I would like to share with you.

What are antibodies?

Antibodies are proteins that our body makes to defend us from pathogens like viruses and bacteria.

What does it mean if I have antibodies?

When antibodies are present, it means the body has been exposed to the pathogen and is thought to have immunity. In the case of COVID-19, we do not have enough information to conclude what if any immunity will be provided with antibodies. However as we study the virus, we are hopeful that antibodies will be protective and the identification of positive antibodies in patients will be useful information in containing the spread of COVID-19.

Who should get tested? And why?

It is my opinion that <u>EVERYONE</u> should get antibody testing. Antibody

testing is the next step in studying this virus and making progress in treating it. Seeing as most individuals were unable to get a COVID-19 test when acutely ill, getting the antibody test provides confirmatory information that was not otherwise available. Knowing your immunity as it pertains to COVID-19 is like any another health screening examination. . . having more information allows better assessment of your over all health status.

What is the most important information which is being obtained from testing patients for antibodies?

1. <u>If you had a positive COVID-19 test</u>: Testing for antibodies and detecting their presence is conclusive of an appropriate immune response by your body. Patients that had a positive COVID-19 swab test are showing antibodies as expected.

2. <u>If you had an illness that you though was COVID-19 but were not able to get tested</u>. In this scenario, having a positive antibody test is conclusive that you were in fact ill with COVID-19. We are seeing many patients that had illness as early as January (before we knew COVID-19 was in the US) that are testing positive for antibodies.

3. <u>Patients who did not have any apparent COVID-19 symptoms and are curious if they had it and didn't even know it</u>. Identifying carriers or asymptomatic cases is the MOST valuable benefit of COVID-19 antibody testing. We are very surprised by the significantly large percentage of people who fall into this category.

What kind of test is best?

When it comes to antibody testing, not are all created equal. The most accurate is a blood (serum) test which is what we use at **CURE**. The test is 97% sensitive. The finger prick tests that are done rapidly have sensitivities of only 84% and highly inaccurate.

When should I get tested?

Testing is most accurate 4 weeks after illness for the IgG antibodies

to be detected. For asymptomatic individuals, testing may be conducted at any time in order to determine if you were a carrier of COVID-19.

Will I be screened to qualify for the ANTIBODY test?

No. At **CURE** anyone can get an antibody test and no pre-qualifying condition are necessary. This is particularly important as it pertains to those who never had COVID-19 symptoms. When you choose **CURE** to get your COVID-19 antibody testing, you are assured that you will have the most accurate up-to-date testing available and the comfort of our medical professionals assessing and helping you interpret the results.
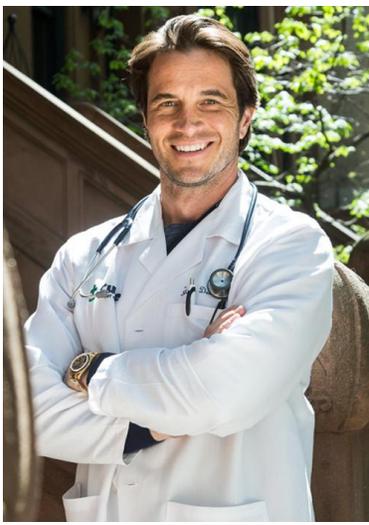
Should I get retested for COVID-19 antibodies?

There are some clinical situations where retesting is necessary. If you were tested less than 4 weeks after an illness, you may have been tested too soon, therefore, it may warrant another test. Additionally, if your clinical history is clearly suspicious of COVID-19 and your antibody test was negative, you may again warrant another test.

Will my insurance cover testing?

Yes. **CURE** is able to now send all patients whose insurance we are in network with to a lab that will cover the cost of the test. Patients are responsible for co-pays and deductibles when applicable.

How much will antibody testing cost if I am not insured?

Should you need to get tested and are not insured, we have created a self-pay rate that is the MOST competitive in NYC - $99 which includes the office visits, blood test, and counseling with a provider. Our competitors are charging anywhere from $120 to as high as $170. We believe that it's critical that as many people get tested as possible and have made testing affordable to lower the barriers for those who do not have health insurance.

At Cure Urgent Care, our mission is to deliver exceptional and affordable care to **everyone.** We truly appreciate your commitment to us and we are equally as committed to caring for you!
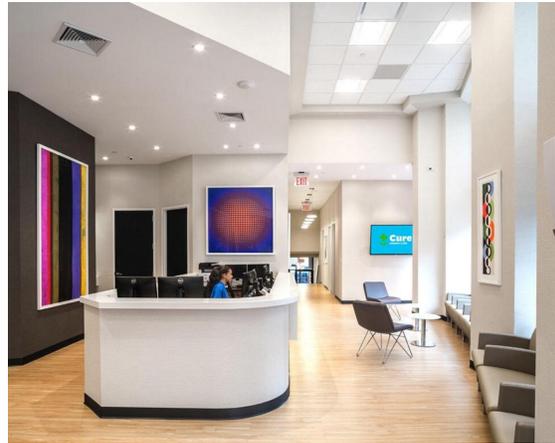
Stay safe and be well!

Dr. Jake Deutsch
Chief Medical Officer
Cure Urgent Care

Our Offices:

Upper West Side

2689 Broadway, New York, NY 10025

(212) 776-4292

Upper East Side

175 E 96th St, New York, NY 10128

(212) 776-4292