

Idaho Statesman

Antibody test won't reveal if you gained immunity from your COVID vaccine, experts say



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For the cautious and vulnerable, such as those with weakened immune systems, taking a coronavirus

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should not be used to determine how much protection someone gains from the vaccines, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration says.

That's because the tests weren't designed to reveal that kind of information; they should only be used to determine if a person had a coronavirus infection in the past, not a current one. What's more, the test may provide false confidence that could put people in harm's way.

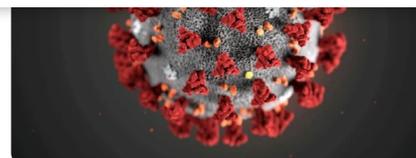
"If antibody test results are interpreted incorrectly, there is a potential risk that people may take fewer precautions against SARS-CoV-2 exposure," the FDA says. "Taking fewer steps to protect against SARS-CoV-2 can increase their risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection and may result in the increased spread of [the virus.]"

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also recommends against taking the test after coronavirus vaccination.

The vaccines produce specific antibodies that the antibody tests, ironically, cannot detect, according to the CDC. This means an antibody test result could come back negative after COVID-19 vaccination, which is known to spur the production of antibodies, in people without a history of previous natural infection.

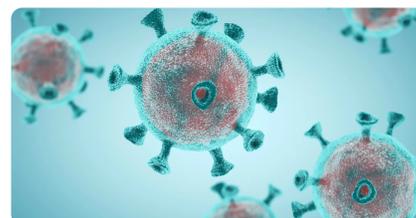
"When most people sign up for [an antibody] test, most laboratories and providers are typically testing for anti-nucleocapsid antibodies," Dr. Luis Ostrosky, an infectious disease specialist with UT Physicians in Texas, wrote in a blog post. "The problem with that is those are not antibodies that would be created by the vaccine, but only through natural infection."

And if your test shows you have low antibody



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levels or none at all, “that does not mean that your vaccination didn’t work,” Ostrosky added.

Scientists are still trying to learn how long antibodies last after natural infection, but early studies show they linger for at least several months and offer some level of protection, although how much is still unclear. If the novel

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coronavirus is anything like others in the coronavirus family, such as the Middle East

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