

## How are my results reported?

Provincial labs are now reporting both COVID-19 test results and, if applicable, the detection of Variants of Concern (VOCs). Your COVID-19 test results include:

1. Your **initial COVID-19 test result** that reports if you have tested positive or negative for the virus.
2. If your initial COVID-19 test result is positive, your result will also include a **VOC screen**, that reports whether your infection is likely to be one of the VOCs.

Variants are viruses that have changed or mutated over time. A variant of the virus that causes COVID-19 becomes a VOC when its changes have a clinical or public health significance that might impact spread, severity of the disease, disease treatment, vaccine effectiveness, or diagnostic testing. For this reason, we assess which variant may be present.

Different variants have different characteristics, and they are named using [letters and numbers indicating the specific gene mutation](#). Currently, most COVID-19 infections in Ontario and Quebec involve a VOC strain.

## What does my initial COVID-19 test result mean?

If your result is **“Not Detected”** or **“Negative”**:

- You tested negative for COVID-19.
- If you have no known exposure to COVID-19 and you have not recently travelled outside of Canada, you can end self-isolation when symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medications.
- If you have a known exposure to COVID-19 or you have recently travelled outside of Canada, you can end self-isolation 14 days from your last exposure to the close contact or your return to Canada, as long as your symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours without fever-reducing medications.
- If this is a re-test following a positive test (i.e., you have tested positive within the preceding 10 days), Ottawa Public Health will advise when you can end self-isolation.
- If symptoms included vomiting or diarrhea, these symptoms must be resolved for 48 hours prior to returning to school, childcare, or work.
- If you develop new symptoms or have ongoing symptoms, re-testing is recommended.

If your result is **“Not performed”** or **“Invalid sample”**:

- A problem occurred during the analysis of your test and no results are available.
- Please return to be tested again as soon as possible – no appointment is necessary.

If your result is **“Indeterminate”**:

- Your test result is in the range where it is difficult to confirm or rule out COVID-19 and must be interpreted in consideration of symptoms and known exposures to COVID-19.
- You must remain in isolation until a staff member at a testing centre or Ottawa Public Health contacts you to explain the next steps.

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### If your result is **“Detected”** or **“Positive”**:

- You tested positive for COVID-19 and your specimen will be further tested to determine the VOC strain of the virus.
- You must remain in isolation until a staff member at the testing centre or Ottawa Public Health contacts you to explain the next steps.
- Your household contacts must isolate themselves for 14 days after their last contact with you and get tested:
  - As soon as possible, and if negative, again on day 10 or later after their last contact with you.
  - If not tested right away, test on day 7 or later after their last contact with you.
  - Immediately if they develop symptoms (even if they have previously tested negative).
- If your household contacts cannot break contact with you (e.g. a young child), then they must self-isolate for 14 days beginning 10 days AFTER your symptom onset.
- Please contact all other people you were in contact with during the 48 hours before you developed symptoms OR 48 hours before you were tested if you do not have symptoms, up until the time you began to self-isolate.
  - They must now isolate for 14 days from their last contact with you.
  - They are advised to get tested immediately if they become symptomatic. If they remain asymptomatic, they should be tested at least 7 days after the last contact with you.

### What does the VOC screening section mean?

If your COVID-19 test result is **“Detected”** or **“Positive”**, then the VOC screening test should be reported within the next 24 to 48 hours.

If your “VOC SG” Record is **“Detected”** then the follow results apply:

If your report is <b>“Detected” for COVID-19 or SARS-CoV-2</b> and <b>“Not Detected”</b> in any other fields	You tested positive for the original COVID-19 strain and no VOC was detected
If your report is <b>“Detected” for N501Y</b> and <b>“Not Detected” for E484K</b>	You likely tested positive for the B.1.1.7 variant (first detected in the United Kingdom)
If your report is <b>“Detected” for N501Y</b> and <b>“Detected” for E484K</b>	You likely tested positive for either the B.1.351 variant (first detected in South Africa) or P.1 variant (first detected in Brazil) as these VOCs carry both mutations
If your report is <b>“Detected” for E484K</b> and <b>“Not Detected” for any other records</b>	You tested negative for known VOCs (the B.1.1.7, B.1.351 and P.1 variants); you may have a different variant that is not known to be a VOC
If your report is <b>“Not Detected” for N501Y and E484K</b>	You tested negative for known VOCs (the B.1.1.7, B.1.351 and P.1 variants)
If your report is <b>“Unable to complete” or “INVALID”</b>	The VOC test was incomplete

*Real examples of the above results can be found on pages 4-6 of this document.*

**Note that testing negative for VOCs does *not* mean that you have tested negative for COVID-19.** Your VOC screen results may state that “COVID-19 was not detected,” which means that it was not detected during the VOC screen phase only.

## **I tested positive for a VOC. What does that mean?**

We are tracking VOCs due to the public health risk. Close monitoring will tell us, at a population level, if VOCs impact the number of people infected and the severity of those infections. This will help officials determine whether different strategies are required to control COVID-19.

There is uncertainty about the significance of a VOC infection and its impact on an individual’s health. Whether you test positive for a VOC or the original COVID-19 strain, your actions and response should remain the same:

- You must self-isolate immediately to protect those around you.
- Your contacts should continue to self-isolate and be tested, as outlined above.
- If your symptoms worsen, please contact your primary care provider, see a doctor at a COVID-19 Care Clinic, or present to the Emergency Department nearest you. If you have severe shortness of breath, have passed out, have chest pain, or any other symptom that prevents you from safely getting to care, please dial 9-1-1 for emergency services.
- Follow Ottawa Public Health’s guidance and continue to be [COVIDWise](#) to help keep COVID-19 under control.

## **For more information**

Visit [www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/TestedWhatNow](http://www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/TestedWhatNow), scan this QR code or call Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744.



# Example VOC test results

## Ontario Laboratories Information System

**Microbiology**

Specimen Type Other	Collection Date/Time 2021-04-01 06:00:00 EDT	Specimen Collected By The Ottawa Hospital - Civic Campus, Ottawa (Lab 4162)
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Name	Result	Flag
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### 2019 Novel Coronavirus PCR

Specimen source	Nose/Throat
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COVID-19 Virus PCR Interpretation	<b>Detected</b>	AA
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test 2  
The Ottawa Hospital - Civic Campus, Ottawa (Lab 4162)

### SARS-CoV-2 Variant Screen

SARS-CoV-2 E484K S Gene Mutation; NAA+probe	Detected
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### Part 1: Initial COVID-19 test result

The patient has tested positive for COVID-19.

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
Ontario laboratories information system (OLIS)

SARS-CoV-2 N501Y S Gene Mutation; NAA+probe	Not Detected
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SARS-CoV-2 S Gene Mutation Interpretation	SARS-CoV-2 E484K S gene mutation associated with Variants of Concern (VOCs) DETECTED. N501Y S gene mutation NOT DETECTED.
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RT-PCR testing performed at EKRLA Regional Microbiology Reference Laboratory, 501 Smyth Road, Ottawa, ON, K1S 8L6  
The Ottawa Hospital - Civic Campus, Ottawa (Lab 4162)

SARS-CoV-2 S Gene Mutation; NAA+probe	Detected
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### Part 2: VOC screen

The report is “**Detected**” for **E484K** and “**Not Detected**” for any other records.

The patient has tested negative for known VOCs (the B.1.1.7, B.1.351 and P.1 variants); they may have a different variant that is not known to be a VOC.

## MyChart portal (The Ottawa Hospital)

Specimen Information: Nasopharyngeal Swab

Component	SARS-CoV-2	Detected
VOC S Gene Mutation by SNP RT-PCR	N501Y S Gene Mutation	Detected
E484K S gene mutation		Not Detected
SARS-CoV-2 S gene mutation interpretation	SARS-CoV-2 N501Y S gene mutation associated with Variants of Concern (VOCs) DETECTED. E484K S gene mutation NOT DETECTED.	
Comment:	RT-PCR testing performed at EORLA Regional Microbiology Reference Laboratory, 501 Smyth Road, Ottawa, ON, K1H 8L6	
Resulting Agency	EORLA	

### Part 1: Initial COVID-19 test result

The patient has tested positive for COVID-19.

### Part 2: VOC screen

The report is “**Detected**” for N501Y and “**Not Detected**” for E484K.

The patient has likely tested positive for the B.1.1.7 variant (first detected in the United Kingdom).

## MyChart portal (CHEO)

SARS COV-2 VOC RT PCR - Details

Details | Past Results | Graph of Past Results

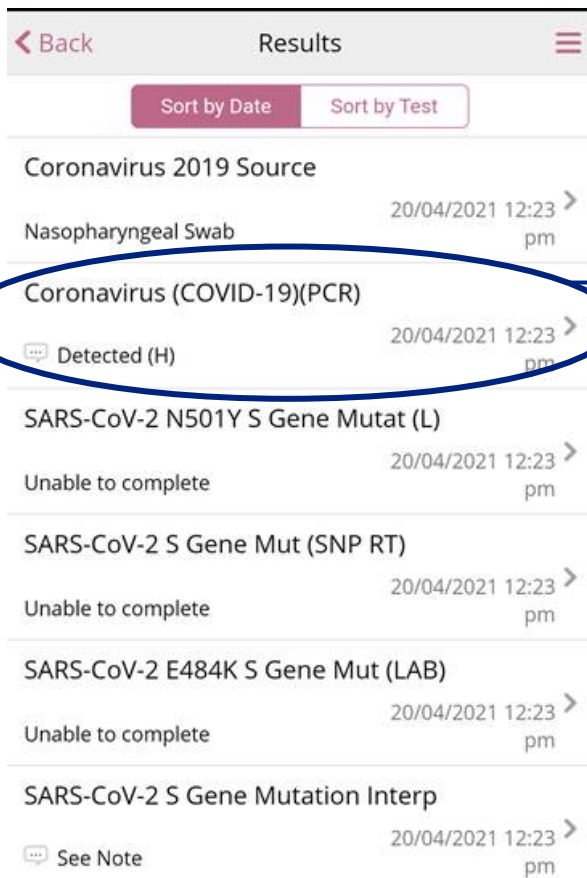
Component	Your Value
SARS -CoV-2 VOC S Gene Mutation by SNP RT-PCR	Detected
N501Y S Gene Mutation	Detected
E484K G Gene Mutation	Not Detected
SARS-CoV-2 S Gene Mutation Interpretation	SARS-CoV-2 N501Y S gene mutation associated with Variants of Concern (VOCs) DETECTED. E484K S gene mutation NOT DETECTED.
RT-PCR testing performed at	EORLA Regional Microbiology Reference Laboratory, 501 Smyth Road, Ottawa, ON, K1H 8L6

### Part 2: VOC screen

The report is “**Detected**” for N501Y and “**Not Detected**” for E484K.

The patient has likely tested positive for the B.1.1.7 variant (first detected in the United Kingdom).

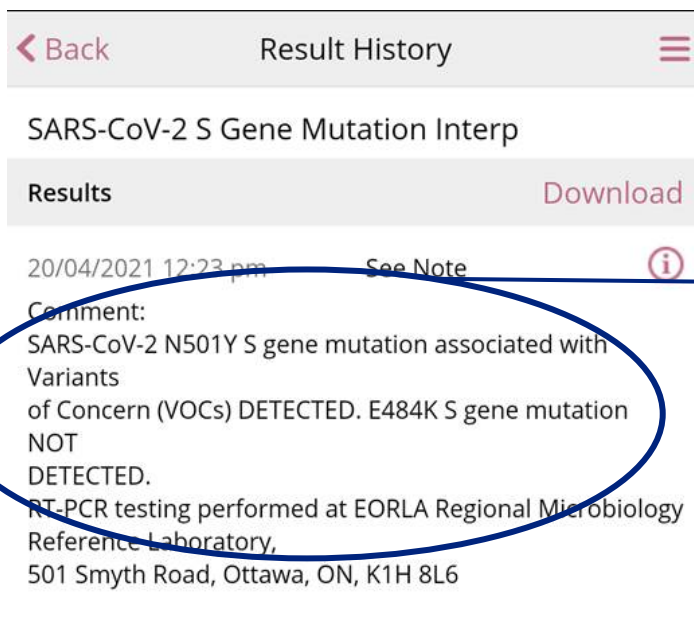
## Meditech portal (Queensway Carleton Hospital)



The screenshot shows the 'Results' page in the Meditech portal. At the top, there are navigation options: '< Back' and 'Results', along with a menu icon. Below this, there are two buttons: 'Sort by Date' and 'Sort by Test'. The main content area lists several test results for 'Coronavirus 2019 Source' from a 'Nasopharyngeal Swab' on 20/04/2021 at 12:23 pm. The first result, 'Coronavirus (COVID-19)(PCR)', is circled in blue and has an arrow pointing to the right. Below it, the result is 'Detected (H)'. Other results include 'SARS-CoV-2 N501Y S Gene Mutat (L)' (Unable to complete), 'SARS-CoV-2 S Gene Mut (SNP RT)' (Unable to complete), 'SARS-CoV-2 E484K S Gene Mut (LAB)' (Unable to complete), and 'SARS-CoV-2 S Gene Mutation Interp' (See Note).

### Part 1: Initial COVID-19 test result

The patient has tested positive for COVID-19.



The screenshot shows the 'Result History' page in the Meditech portal. At the top, there are navigation options: '< Back' and 'Result History', along with a menu icon. Below this, there is a section for 'SARS-CoV-2 S Gene Mutation Interp'. There are two buttons: 'Results' and 'Download'. Below this, there is a date and time '20/04/2021 12:23 pm' and a 'See Note' link. A blue circle highlights the 'See Note' link and an information icon (i) to its right. Below this, there is a 'Comment:' section with the following text: 'SARS-CoV-2 N501Y S gene mutation associated with Variants of Concern (VOCs) DETECTED. E484K S gene mutation NOT DETECTED. RT-PCR testing performed at EORLA Regional Microbiology Reference Laboratory, 501 Smyth Road, Ottawa, ON, K1H 8L6'. An arrow points from the 'See Note' link to the right.

### Part 2: VOC screen

The report is “**Detected**” for **N501Y** and “**Not Detected**” for **E484K**.

The patient has likely tested positive for the B.1.1.7 variant (first detected in the United Kingdom).