

UArizona COVID-19 antibody testing to expand with state funding

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<https://kvoa.com/coronavirus-coverage/2020/05/15/university-of-arizona-and-the-state-are-expanding-covid-19-antibody-testing-statewide/>

TUCSON - The University of Arizona has been working on antibody testing for a few weeks and in late April, they developed an extremely accurate test. On Friday, Arizona's state government provided funding for that testing to expand.

Many doctors at UArizona have been hard at work on better testing for the coronavirus. The tests used for antibody testing had been crude and inaccurate, however, that changed a couple weeks ago when UArizona developed a new test. This new test worked so well that it is being expanded.



Daniel Derksen is a doctor at UArizona and is one of the people overseeing the expansion.

“I think this will be a much more precise tool,” Derksen said. “The intention of this program is to do 250,000 tests across the state in all 15 counties.”

The best part is that this test isn't a nose swab, but a much easier blood test.

“The real difference with the way that ours actually works is that rather than trying to use the human eye to determine if someone is positive or negative, is that our asset puts a quantitative number on the data,” said Deepta Bhattacharya, another doctor tied to the antibody testing project.

“So it allows us to put very strict statistical thresholds so it allows us to say if it is correct verses wrong,” Bhattacharya said.



The next hurdle is to figure out if the immunity from the coronavirus is permanent and as of now, it is too early to tell.

“It would imply that you have immunity, but we don't know enough about this one to say whether it confers immunity or for how long that the immunity might last,” Derksen said.

There will be 31 sites with at least two in every county and are scheduled to open Monday.