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Dear Patient,

Foxhall Internists is now offering a blood test to detect antibodies to the coronavirus which causes COVID-19. A person's immune system produces these antibodies during and after infection.

We have been working to identify the most accurate tests available at this time, and we will continue to update our testing methods as new and more precise tests become available.

While the nasal test for the coronavirus can demonstrate a *current* infection, the antibody test is a means of indicating *past* infection. In principle, a negative test means one has not had a coronavirus infection and is therefore still susceptible to it. A positive test indicates a person has had a coronavirus infection.

There are a number of important caveats to antibody testing which are important for you to understand. If you have any questions about this test, further discussion with your doctor is advised.

1. The test is reported to be reliable, but not perfect.
2. There will be some people with false positive test results (people who have not had COVID-19 but test positive for antibodies to it). This could result from having had an infection with a similar virus in the past.
3. There will also be false negative test results (people who had COVID-19 but test negative). This might result from a mild case of COVID-19 or from a test taken too soon after illness, before the immune system has generated enough antibodies to register on the test.
4. While having antibodies to coronavirus may confer immunity to re-infection, this is not known with certainty.
5. **Even if antibodies to COVID-19 are detected by this test, you should continue to adhere to the social-distancing practices recommended by public health authorities. Again, this is not a perfect test, and the presence of antibodies has not definitely been shown to protect against reinfection.**