

# What's a COVID-19 test like?

BY NORM CANNADA  
THE JOURNAL

SENECA —

It was one of those things that sounded like a good idea at work on Friday, but didn't seem nearly as intelligent when it was time to actually go through it on Saturday morning.

I decided to get a test for COVID-19.

Prisma Health was doing a community testing event at Blue Ridge Elementary School. I knew the test had a lot of interest because of the fear of the coronavirus. The school is less than a half mile from my apartment, and I suggested to my editor I could go through

the testing, find out what it's like and share that in The Journal.

By the time the time came for me to take the test, I was more than a little nervous. I pulled my car to the spot I had been directed to, where Dr. Amie Jakubiak was ready to

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administer the first of 243 COVID-19 tests in Seneca that day.

"This is going to hurt a lot, isn't it?" I asked, having already been warned by two people who had tested negative for the virus in March.

"It's not going to be painful," Dr. Jakubiak responded in a calm voice. "But you're not going to love me."

She was right on both counts.

It wasn't painful, but it wasn't fun, either. It only lasted a few seconds, and she pulled out the swab about the time I started thinking it needed to come out.

I was still waiting on my test results at press time Monday, but I didn't really feel bad or believe I had the virus. But it is allergy season, and many of the symptoms are similar.

Dr. Kerry Sease, Prisma Health's lead physician for the community testing events in the Upstate, said it is more difficult for allergy sufferers to know if their symptoms are just allergies or an indication of the virus.

"I think a lot of people are confused about that," Sease said. "If you typically have allergies, take your allergy medicine — get on it regularly to see if that makes your symp-

toms go away. I would say the big difference is fever, chills and muscle aches — the typical flu-like symptoms you would not necessarily see with allergies. It's really been hard for people to differentiate.

"If anything is different than your typical allergy symptoms or you have fever or chills, then call your physician," she added. "They want to help you, so they can do a virtual visit or they can decide if you need to come in. We're doing lots of virtual visits to make

families feel safe and to keep our practices as safe as possible as well."

Sease explained how the test would be administered and what to expect. This is a nasopharyngeal swab that goes "as far up your nose as we can get it," according to the doctor.

"We get back in the deepest area we can back there and take the swab," she said. "It's not painful, but not comfortable. If you've ever had a flu test, it's a very similar process in how far into the nose we have to go."

She added community testing is happening "so there can be widespread testing in our community."

"I hope that we test as many people who have concerns about either being exposed or having symptoms so that we can reach those who are positive and do better education and stop the spread," Sease said. "The more we know who has it, the more we can stop the spread of this disease."

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Dr. Amie Jakubiak of Prisma Health inserts a nasopharyngeal swab in Journal reporter Norm Cannada's nose during COVID-19 testing at Blue Ridge Elementary School on Saturday. He was one of 243 people who were tested in Seneca, one of four Prisma Health testing sites Friday and Saturday.

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