

Update from the Chief Dental Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service



RADM Timothy Ricks, Chief Dental Officer

Good afternoon,

Here are a couple of quick COVID updates.

1. **ADA COVID-19 codes.** CDT codes related to COVID-19 vaccine administration and testing by oral health professionals have been released.
2. **Variants can cause false negative results.** The FDA today released information on the impact of viral mutations on COVID-19 tests at https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-covid-19-and-medical-devices/sars-cov-2-viral-mutations-impact-covid-19-tests?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery. In that information, the FDA said:

The FDA recommends clinical laboratory staff and health care providers who use SARS-CoV-2 tests:

- 1) Be aware that genetic variants of SARS-CoV-2 arise regularly, and false negative test results can occur.
- 2) Be aware that molecular tests that use multiple genetic targets to determine a final result are less likely to be impacted by increased prevalence of genetic variants.
- 3) Consider negative results in combination with clinical observations, patient history, and epidemiological information.
- 4) Consider repeat testing with a different EUA authorized or FDA cleared molecular diagnostic test (with different genetic targets) if COVID-19 is still suspected after receiving a negative test result.

In Saluti Officio (In the Service of Health),

RADM Ricks

Timothy L. Ricks, DMD, MPH, FICD

Rear Admiral (RADM), Assistant Surgeon General
Chief Dental Officer, U.S. Public Health Service