

Program Implementation Guide

RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING 2021-2022

Thank you for your participation in rapid antigen testing for **symptomatic** children and staff. Participation in rapid antigen testing is **voluntary**, unless you are an unvaccinated staff (For child care programs operated by First Nations, participation in rapid antigen testing is voluntary for symptomatic children and staff, as well as unvaccinated staff). Unvaccinated staff will continue to be provided with rapid antigen tests as part of the Vaccine Disclosure Policy and are required to follow those testing requirements.

This guide will provide an overview of key information related to this testing option which aligns with updated testing guidance ([Interim Guidance for Schools and Child Care Omicron Surge - English \(gov.on.ca\)](#)) from the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH). **Please read carefully as it contains critical information for the implementation of this testing option..**

1. Rapid Antigen Testing Overview for Symptomatic Students / Staff:

The Ministry of Education, in partnership with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, is providing publicly funded schools and licensed child care programs with rapid antigen test kits for **symptomatic** students, children, child care providers and staff , **for at-home use if they develop symptoms.**

This rapid antigen testing option is intended to provide an additional tool for schools and licensed child care programs to use to help minimize absenteeism.

Individuals with symptoms compatible with COVID-19 are presumed to have COVID-19 and are advised to self-isolate. Symptomatic individuals can use rapid antigen tests in alignment with the updated testing guidance ([Interim Guidance for Schools and Child Care Omicron Surge - English \(gov.on.ca\)](#)).

- If the individual who tests **positive** is fully vaccinated or 11 years of age or younger they must self-isolate for at least 5 days from symptom onset and until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms), whichever is longer in duration.
- If the individual who tests **positive** is 12 years of age or older and is either partially vaccinated or unvaccinated they must self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset or from the date of their test (whichever was earlier).

- If the individual who tests **positive** is immune compromised (regardless of age and vaccination status) they must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, or from the date of their test (whichever came sooner).
- If two consecutive rapid antigen tests, separated by 24-48 hours, are both **negative**, the symptomatic individual is less likely to have COVID-19 infection, and the individual should isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms are present).
 - If symptoms persist / worsen, individuals are encouraged to seek advice from Telehealth or their health care provider.

Parents/guardians can choose if their child participates in this additional testing option. If participating, testing is to be completed at home. If a symptomatic individual chooses **not** to participate in this testing option, they would be presumed positive and would be required to isolate and follow the [updated guidance](#).

2. Equipment, Supplies Provided and De-Kitting Instructions:

- For programs co-located with publicly funded schools, tests will be made available through the school/school board. For community-based programs, tests will be made available through the local service system manager. Please do not reach out to your school or service system manager at this time.
- Supplies contained in the boxes of tests include:
 - testing cartridge
 - swabs
 - depending on test type, either: test tubes + dispenser tip + pre-portioned ampules of buffer solution **OR** pre-filled test tube with buffer solution
- Schools boards/schools/child care programs will be required to de-kit the boxes in order to distribute 2 tests per individual in alignment with the testing guidance.
 - **Please note:** if an individual tests positive, they are not required to use the second test to confirm the positive. Use of **both** tests is only required to confirm a negative result.
- To make the mini kits with enough supplies for conducting two tests, do the following:
 1. If available, boards/schools/child care programs may wish to conduct the positive and negative control swabs on each new lot or shipment of rapid antigen tests for quality assurance purposes, however this step is **not required**.

2. Collect two of all the necessary supplies for each kit, including:
 - Two (2) foil wrapped test cartridges
 - Two (2) packaged swabs
 - Depending on test type, either:
 - a) Two (2) prefilled test tubes with buffer solution **OR**
 - b) Two (2) test tubes + two (2) dispenser tips + two (2) pre-portioned ampules of buffer solution
3. Put supplies into a small bag or another type of container.
 - Information letter to child care communities should be distributed with the kits but does not need to be included the small bag.

3. **Distribution and Implementation:**

- As part of the initial distribution, licensed child care programs may distribute a kit of 2 rapid antigen tests to children and staff. These tests are only to be used by the individuals to whom they have been distributed and only if they become **symptomatic**. As noted above, parents/guardians can choose if their child participates in this additional testing option. Participation is **voluntary**. If participating, testing is to be completed at home. If a symptomatic individual (staff, provider or child) chooses **not** to participate in this testing option, they would be presumed positive and would be required to isolate.
 - NOTE: Unvaccinated staff and providers in schools and child care programs will continue to receive rapid antigen tests for required screening testing through existing local distribution processes.
- Students, children, and staff participating in this screening are to be informed of the following instructions (please note this is also outlined in Appendix 1 – letter to child care communities):
 - Testing is to take place at an individual’s residence. Individuals will receive two rapid antigen tests.
 - **If the first rapid antigen test is positive** there is no need to use the second test. A positive rapid antigen test is highly indicative that the individual has COVID-19. Positive rapid antigen tests do NOT need to be reported to the public health unit, school or child care

- **If the first rapid antigen test is negative**, complete the second test within 24-48 hours of the first test. If two consecutive rapid antigen tests, separated by 24-48 hours, are both **negative**, the symptomatic individual is less likely to have COVID-19 infection. The individual should isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms are present).
 - If symptoms persist / worsen, individuals are encouraged to seek advice from Telehealth or a health care provider.
- Appendix 1: Letter to Child Care Communities is included to distribute along with the test kits to students, children and staff for use when they are symptomatic.
- Following the initial distribution of rapid antigen test kits, schools and child care programs will distribute a kit of 2 tests per individual if an individual develops symptoms.
- Further information will be provided about ongoing ordering process.

Appendix 1: Sample Letter to Child Care Communities (Please Print and Provide with Kits)

In an effort to help slow the spread of COVID-19, reduce absenteeism, and to continue to support our child care communities, the <insert child care program> is pleased to offer rapid antigen test kits for **symptomatic** non-school aged children, and child care providers and staff.

In alignment with the updated testing guidance from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, individuals may use rapid antigen tests if they are experiencing symptoms compatible with COVID-19. The test kit provided to you contains two rapid antigen tests. This testing option is **voluntary** for children and child care providers and staff. If a symptomatic individual chooses **not** to participate, they are presumed positive and should isolate immediately and follow updated testing guidance:

https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/school_childcare_guidance_omicron.pdf

Please read the information below carefully, if choosing to participate.

When to Use a Take-home Rapid Antigen Screening Kit:

- For individuals choosing to participate in this testing option, they must display symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19. As outlined in the updated guidance (https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf), this includes:
 - Fever and/or chills; OR
 - Cough; OR
 - Shortness of breath; OR
 - Decrease or loss of taste or smell; OR
 - **Two or more of:**
 - runny nose/nasal congestion
 - headache
 - extreme fatigue
 - sore throat
 - muscle aches/joint pain
 - gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e. vomiting or diarrhea)
- Symptomatic individuals must complete the rapid antigen tests at home.
- If the first RAT test is positive there is no need to use the second test. A positive RAT is highly indicative that the individual has COVID-19. A positive RAT does NOT need to be confirmed with a PCR test. Positive RAT tests do NOT need to be reported to the public health unit, school or child care

- If the first RAT test is negative complete the second test separated by 24-48 hours.

Using the Take-home Rapid Antigen Screening Kit:

- There are 3 different varieties of rapid antigen tests that are being distributed by the province. Please see the links below for instructions on how to use each variety:

1. **BTNX Rapid Response™:**

<https://www.ontariohealth.ca/sites/ontariohealth/files/2022-01/BTNXSelfScreeningInstructions.pdf>

2. **SD Biosensor:** <https://www.ontariohealth.ca/sites/ontariohealth/files/2021-12/SDBiosensorSelfScreeningInstructions.pdf>

3. **Trimedica FaStep®:**

<https://www.ontariohealth.ca/sites/ontariohealth/files/2022-01/Trimedica%20Self%20Screening%20Instructions.pdf>

- You may also reference this how-to video: <https://youtu.be/EWSFJ1JoUd0>

Important note: Parents or guardians may choose to administer this screening on children who may need help (i.e. younger children).

What to do after your test:

- You will know the outcome of the test within 15 minutes.
- **If the first rapid antigen test is positive**, there is no need to use the second test. A positive rapid antigen test is highly indicative that the individual has COVID-19. Positive rapid antigen tests do NOT need to be reported to the public health unit, school or child care.
- **If the first rapid antigen test is negative**, complete the second test within 24-48 hours of the first test. If two consecutive rapid antigen tests, separated by 24-48 hours, are both **negative**, the symptomatic individual is less likely to have COVID-19 infection, and the individual should isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms are present).
- If the individual who tests **positive** is fully vaccinated or 11 years of age or younger, they must self-isolate for at least 5 days from symptom onset and until

their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms), whichever is longer in duration.

- If the individual who tests **positive** is 12 years of age or older and is either partially vaccinated or unvaccinated they must self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset or from the date of their test (whichever was earlier).
- If the individual who tests **positive** is immune compromised (regardless of age and vaccination status) they must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, or from the date of their test (whichever came sooner).
 - If symptoms persist / worsen, individuals are encouraged to seek advice from Telehealth or their health care provider.
 - Please note: in alignment with updated testing guidance, there is no confirmatory PCR test required if an individual tests positive. For more information about what to do if you receive a positive test results, please following the guidance found at:
https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/school_childcare_guidance_omicron.pdf