

Rapid testing for the Provincial Antigen Screening Program

Find out who to test, when to test, what to do when someone gets a positive test result and how to dispose of hazardous waste.

Rapid testing can help your business stay open

Using rapid tests is an effective way to identify cases in asymptomatic individuals, and may help to prevent outbreaks in the workplace and to keep workplaces open.

Rapid tests are free

Under the [Provincial Antigen Screening Program](#) (PASP), the Ontario government provides [rapid tests for free](#) to eligible workplaces.

As [announced on May 12](#), 2021, any organization that is permitted to open as per current public health measures and where individuals must be physically present at the workplace is eligible to apply. Organizations would have to submit a complete application online which would be subject to review.

Rapid testing can be done anywhere and give a result within 15 minutes

A COVID-19 rapid test can be performed anywhere at the workplace. Results are available within 15 minutes and do not require shipping to a lab.

Rapid tests should only be used for asymptomatic individuals showing no symptoms of COVID-19 and who are not a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Rapid tests should not be used during an outbreak unless they are used in addition to (not as a replacement for) diagnostic PCR testing and under the guidance of the local Public Health Unit.

Notify your local Public Health Unit before testing begins

Organizations should notify their [local Public Health Unit](#) before implementing rapid testing.

Hire or train people to perform testing

Rapid tests can be performed by a health professional (both [regulated](#) and unregulated) or trained individuals. The Ministry of Health has also provided a clinical endorsement for voluntary self-swabbing under the supervision of a trained individual. An individual is considered trained once they have watched this [video](#).

Test people who don't have symptoms and people who have been vaccinated

Only people who have no [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and are not a close contact of someone with COVID-19. Vaccinated individuals should continue to be included in rapid testing initiatives and continue to follow all other public health measures in the workplace.

Use rapid tests together with PPE and social distancing

Employees must continue to adhere to the necessary COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures, such as appropriate distancing, use of PPE, and hand washing, to reduce the risk of infection and keep workers and their families safe.

Test 1-3 times per week

Rapid tests can be performed between 1-3 times per week per employee. More frequent screening can increase the chances of identifying an otherwise asymptomatic case of COVID-19.

Confirm positive results with a lab-based PCR test within 48 hours

A positive result on a rapid antigen test is considered a preliminary or presumptive positive. Any individual who receives a positive result on a rapid test must seek a confirmatory lab-based PCR test within 48 hours and isolate until the results of the confirmatory test are known.

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The 2 types of rapid tests available are Abbott Panbio™ and BD Veritor™

Abbott Panbio™ are single use test kits that meet the needs of most organizations. This test kit works well for low and high testing volumes and is recommended for organizations with multiple testing sites.

BD Veritor™ test kits require a small analyzer machine. This test kit is recommended for organizations with high testing volumes and a limited number of testing sites.

Rapid testing cannot help non-essential businesses to re-open sooner

Non-essential business like restaurants, bars, hair/nail salons, or non-essential retailers cannot re-open if they implement rapid testing. Your site must be allowed to reopen under [Ontario's Roadmap to Reopen](#) first. Rapid tests are a key component to keeping workplaces open and safe for workers and their families.

There is help and guidance for businesses to safely handle waste

Waste generated from rapid antigen screening tests is considered a hazardous waste under the *Environmental Protection Act*.

To help get businesses up and running with rapid antigen testing faster, Ontario has exempted businesses from requirements related to the collection, storage and transportation of hazardous waste related to testing kits, while still requiring that the used kits are sent for final treatment and disposal at an approved hazardous waste disposal site in Ontario.

This will make it easier for small businesses or other persons to safely handle this waste while still protecting human health and the environment. It will also provide businesses with more options in deciding how they should store and transport this waste for final disposal, while still protecting human health and the environment.

For information on how waste from rapid testing kits should be safely handled, including recommendations that the waste should continue to be stored and transported in a sealed biohazard container, please refer to [Ontario's guidance on the safe handling and management of rapid antigen COVID-19 testing waste](#).

Use rapid tests ethically

Any rapid test that is provided free of charge by the government is not to be re-distributed or re-sold under any circumstance, nor are sites allowed to charge individuals for the screening test.

Government data collection for the PASP protects personal privacy

Sites using rapid antigen screening tests that have been provided free of charge by the government must report a small amount of aggregate data on a weekly basis through a provincial Web Portal to track test usage. All data is de-identified and no personal health information is collected by the province.

