

Interested in Rapid Antigen Screening?

Information Document



Ontario is **enhancing public health and safety** through the provision of **rapid antigen screening tests** to proactively identify potential cases of COVID-19 among asymptomatic individuals that may otherwise go undetected by routine screening measures (e.g. symptom screening).

Organizations in Ontario are encouraged to check their eligibility for accessing free antigen screening kits by visiting [Ontario.ca/testingonsite](https://ontario.ca/testingonsite).

Provincial Guidance for Antigen Screening in Ontario

All sites implementing rapid antigen screening in Ontario **must ensure the screening tests are used in accordance with the [Provincial Guidance for Antigen Screening in Ontario](#)**, including the key protocols outlined below:

- Rapid antigen screening does not replace COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures.
- Rapid antigen screening should only be used for asymptomatic individuals (showing no symptoms of COVID-19).
- Rapid antigen screening testing is generally not recommended for individuals who are fully vaccinated.
- Rapid antigen screening should not be used during an outbreak.
- Organizations should notify their [local Public Health Unit](#) before implementing rapid antigen screening.
- Rapid antigen screening can be performed by a health professional (both [regulated](#) and unregulated) or a trained individual. The Ministry of Health has also provided clinical endorsement for voluntary self-swabbing under the supervision of a trained individual. An individual is considered trained once they have watched [this video](#).
- Specimen collection for rapid antigen screening tests may also be done voluntarily by the person being tested ('self-swabbing'). Any individual doing self-swabbing must consult the self-swabbing [training resource](#) developed by Ontario Health in collaboration with Public Health Ontario and ensure they have appropriate knowledge, skills and judgement to perform the test including how to operate the device.
- Individuals and organizations are under no obligation to conduct rapid antigen screening tests using self-swabbing (supervised or unsupervised); use of self-swabbing (supervised or unsupervised) is to be done only on a voluntary basis.
- Unsupervised self-swabbing also enables employees to complete the antigen screening test at home before they travel to the workplace, and may help reduce implementation challenges associated with onsite testing (e.g., workplaces without a centralized site to test employees).
- For more information on how to perform supervised or unsupervised self-swabbing, and for information on how to self-screen at home, please visit [Ontario Health website](#).



For more information, please visit:
ontario.ca/testingonsite

Ontario 

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Provincial Guidance for Antigen Screening in Ontario (Cont.)

- A positive result on a rapid antigen screening test is considered to be a preliminary positive result. Any individual who receives a preliminary positive result on a rapid antigen screening test must go home immediately and self-isolate at home until you receive your confirmatory test result. The individual needs to seek a confirmatory lab-based PCR test or rapid POC molecular test as soon as possible (ideally within 48 hours).
- If using a rapid POC molecular test, the test result must be able to be reported into the Ontario Laboratories Information System (OLIS).
- As per COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance, an individual who receives a positive antigen test result must self-isolate, until the result of the confirmatory, lab-based PCR test or rapid POC molecular test is known. In the event that a confirmatory, rapid POC molecular test is negative, the individual will need to receive a confirmatory, lab-based PCR test, and should continue to isolate until the result of that test is received.
- A workplace that chooses to set up an on-site testing clinic can elect to follow any workflow/ process that is operationally feasible and follows appropriate IPAC and health and safety protocols.
- Waste generated from rapid antigen screening tests is considered a hazardous waste under the *Environmental Protection Act*. Waste from these tests is exempt from collection, storage and transportation requirements as long as the waste is disposed in Ontario. This waste must still be disposed of at a waste facility approved to handle biomedical waste. In addition, those collecting, storing or transporting these kits should follow Ontario's guidance on the Safe Handling and Management of Rapid Antigen COVID-19 Testing Waste.
- For waste generated from at-home rapid antigen screening the regulatory requirements for managing the hazardous waste under the *Environmental Protection Act* do not apply. Instead, persons undertaking at-home rapid antigen tests should consult their local municipality's by-laws on the proposal disposal of this waste to ensure it can be disposed of with the household trash.
- Anyone collecting, storing or transporting these kits should follow Ontario's guidance on the [Safe Handling and Management of Rapid Antigen COVID-19 Testing Waste](#).



To also note:

- Any rapid antigen screening 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.
- 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.
 - For organizations that pick-up tests from a distribution hub (e.g., a local Chamber of Commerce), required data should be reported in the manner indicated by the pick-up location.
 - Additional data reporting options may be available for organizations receiving implementation support through Creative Destruction Lab Rapid Screening Consortium