

# Rapid screening tests

## School program

Information for parents, students and school staff

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### Rapid screening tests at school

The rapid screening test program is expanding to more schools and regions. Screening students and staff can quickly identify people without symptoms who may have COVID-19.

This will allow students and staff to isolate sooner and help reduce the virus spread.

Rapid screening tests are another tool, along with health measures already in place at schools, to keep students and staff safe.

Schools will be selected based on a variety of factors, including how prevalent COVID-19 cases are in a school or community.

### Consent

Testing is optional for staff and students. Signed consent forms are required for testing.

### Steps

Schools in the program will tell you the dates of the rapid screening tests. A team of health professionals will be at the school during school hours to offer the tests for those who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and are not close contacts of a confirmed case. People isolating or in quarantine away from school cannot get a test.

The rapid screening tests may be offered up to two times at school, approximately one week apart. This

may increase the chances of identifying more people who need to isolate as early as possible.

### Getting a rapid screening test

A health professional will insert a nasal swab just inside the nose. The swab will be tested to identify if the person may have COVID-19.

A rapid screening test nasal swab is typically more comfortable and less irritating than the swab usually used to test for COVID-19 at an Alberta Health Services (AHS) testing centre.

Students and staff members will return to class while waiting for their results.

### Results

#### Negative results

There is **no** notification of a negative rapid screening test result.

A negative result does not guarantee someone does not have COVID-19 or will not become infected later.

Everyone should continue to follow all public health measures: physical distancing, wearing a mask, remaining in cohorts and washing hands regularly.

#### Positive results

For a positive result, the student will safely isolate at school until parents or guardians are contacted to pick up their child.

If a staff member receives a positive result, they will safely isolate at school until they leave.

A positive rapid test result cannot confirm someone has COVID-19. Only a more accurate lab-based COVID-19 test at an [AHS testing site](#) can confirm a COVID-19 infection.

However, someone with a positive rapid screening test result is required to isolate for 10 days from the date their test was completed unless their COVID-19 lab test from AHS is negative.

Staff and students with a positive rapid screening test result should book an appointment for a COVID-19 test online at [www.ahs.ca/covid](http://www.ahs.ca/covid) or call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible.

## Close contacts

Close contacts of someone who has a positive rapid screening test result are not required to quarantine until an AHS test confirms the positive result.

## Previous positive COVID-19 test

If someone tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days, they should **not** have a rapid screening test at school. Some people who have recovered from COVID-19 may show a positive result in a rapid screening test for up to 90 days, even though they are no longer infectious.

Please do **not** provide consent for your child to participate in this program if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days.

## COVID-19 and variants

Only lab-confirmed tests by AHS can confirm if a person has COVID-19 and whether it is a variant of concern.

## Accuracy of rapid tests

Rapid screening tests are not as accurate as lab-confirmed tests done through AHS.

The likelihood of someone with no symptoms having a false positive result from a rapid test is low.

However, all positive results from a rapid screening test still require to be confirmed by an AHS lab-test.

The likelihood of someone with no symptoms having a false negative result is higher. A negative result on a rapid screening test does not mean that person is not infected or could not become infectious.

## Additional questions

If you have questions about this school rapid screening test program, please email:

[EDC.SchoolRapidTesting@gov.ab.ca](mailto:EDC.SchoolRapidTesting@gov.ab.ca).

For the latest COVID-19 information:

[www.alberta.ca/Covid19](http://www.alberta.ca/Covid19)