October 29, 2021

RE: Take-Home PCR COVID-19 Testing

Dear Parent(s), Guardian(s), Students, and Staff

Ottawa Public Health (OPH), together with our partners at CHEO, is offering free take-home PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) COVID-19 testing kits for students and staff at your school who develop symptoms of COVID-19 or are identified as a high-risk contact. We hope that using these school Take-Home PCR test kits will make accessing COVID-19 testing for you (your child) easier when they develop symptoms or are identified as a high-risk contact. Completing a take-home PCR test kit may allow you (your child) to return to school sooner if the result is negative.

About the Take-Home PCR COVID-19 Test Kits:

What test is the Take-Home PCR Test Kit?
The take-home test kits are a PCR test. The kit includes a combined mouth and nose swab that a child or adult can do themselves, or that can be done by parent(s)/guardian(s) or caregiver(s). This test is done using the non-invasive method of swabbing, and takes only seconds to complete. The take-home test kits will include detailed instructions about how to do the test, how to fill out the form included in the kit, labelling and storing the test sample, and where to return it. It is important to note that these Take-Home PCR tests are not Rapid Antigen tests, and must be returned to an Assessment Centre for processing.

To find out more about this test, you can watch a short video here: How to do a combined nose and mouth swab for COVID-19 - YouTube

Who can take the tests?
The tests are offered to staff and students who develop one or more symptom(s) (most commonly associated with COVID-19 and/or the other symptoms of COVID-19). They are also offered to individuals, classes or cohorts identified as high-risk contacts by OPH. It is important to note that these test kits have an expiry date. Be sure to use this kit before the expiry date on the tube. If your kit is expired, please contact your school for a new test kit.

Test kits may also be offered for school wide testing as part of investigations and outbreaks.

Where can parent(s)/guardian(s) or individuals do the test?
Ideally, tests are completed on-site at the school (e.g., in the parking lot at school or in the car), but they can also be taken home. It is important to carefully plan when you will use the test so that it can be returned to the school or an Assessment Centre the same day, during operating hours. Please note that student tests will not be performed or supervised by school staff.

It is important to note: by completing the Take-Home PCR test kit and dropping it off at the school, you are consenting to a COVID-19 test for you or your child. Your (your child’s) personal health information will be protected and only known to those at CHEO and OPH that need to know. Your (your child’s) participation is appreciated and will help reduce spread of COVID-19 in our community.
Where can completed tests be dropped off?
When using a school Take-Home PCR Test kit, please make sure you are able to return it the same day. The completed test can be returned to the school during school operational hours. However, if the school is closed, parent(s)/guardian(s) or individuals must bring the completed test to one of the Assessment Centres:

- CHEO Assessment Centre at Brewer Park Arena (151 Brewer Way, Ottawa); Hours of operation:
  Monday – Friday 10:30 am – 5:30 pm
  Saturday – Sunday 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

- COVID-19 Care and Testing Centre - Moodie location (595 Moodie Drive, Ottawa); Hours of operation:
  Monday – Friday 8:00– 3:30 pm

- COVID-19 Care and Testing Centre - Ray Friel location (1585 Tenth Line, Orleans); Hours of operation:
  Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 3:30 pm

Assessment Centre hours are subject to change during weekends and holidays. For more information on COVID-19 testing and Assessment Centre Hours, please visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDtesting.

What is the expiry date on completed tests?
Completed Take-Home PCR Tests are time and temperature sensitive. This means that they will expire in a short time-frame. It is important that the test be returned to the school the same day it is used. Return the test kit to the school or to one of the Assessment Centres listed above, during operating hours.

After You (Your Child) have Completed the Test:

Do I (my child) need to stay home and isolate after dropping off the completed test?
- You (your child) must stay home and self-isolate while waiting for the test result, unless OPH told you (your child) that you do not need to isolate.
- If you (your child) do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and are either: (1) fully vaccinated* or (2) have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days (and since been cleared) you (your child) do not need to self-isolate while waiting for the test result.

How can parent(s)/guardian(s) or individuals access their (children’s) test results?
Parent(s)/guardian(s) and individuals can access their results online. You will find instructions in the printed documents of the Take-Home PCR Kit package.

Please note:
- If the individual being tested is a child/adult and has a MyChart account, they can access their results by logging into their MyChart account.
- If the individual being tested is an adult and has an OHIP Card, they can access their results through the provincial site.
- If the individual being tested does not have MyChart or OHIP Card, they cannot see their results on the provincial site. They may contact the CHEO Patient Experience line, 48 – 72 hours after returning the test kit, at 613-737-7600 ext. 6720 for assistance.
What is the expected timeframe to receive results?
After dropping off the completed test kit, COVID-19 results should become available within approximately 48-72 hours. By using MyChart you will be given access to the test results immediately after the lab reports them.

What do I (my child) do after test results are received?
Please follow the instructions below depending on your situation:

Negative COVID-19 test result:

A. If you (your child) have been identified as a High-Risk Contact by OPH:
   • If you (your child) are not fully vaccinated, you (your child) must stay home and self-isolate for 10 days starting from the last day you (your child) were in contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 (even if the test is negative).
B. If you (your child) have one or more symptom(s):
   • You (your child) can end self-isolation when symptoms have improved for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (or 48 hours if vomiting or diarrhea) unless you (your child) are identified as a high-risk contact.

Positive COVID-19 test result:

• You (your child) and all household contacts who are not fully vaccinated must stay home and self-isolate.
• OPH will call you (your child) to provide further instructions and guidance. Instructions will include self-isolation dates and additional information for household contacts.

*Fully vaccinated means that it has been at least 14 days since you received:
• the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada (e.g., 2 doses of Moderna, Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD, OR 1 dose of Janssen [Johnson & Johnson]) or any combination of such vaccines, OR
• one or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada (e.g., Sinopharm) followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada (e.g., Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) OR
• three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada (e.g., Abdala).

For more information

If you have any questions about this take-home COVID-19 testing opportunity, please call Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744.

Thank you,

Ottawa Public Health