Rapid Antigen Testing for COVID-19

What is a Rapid Antigen Test?

- Rapid antigen testing is used to screen for potential COVID-19 infection in people who have no symptoms. A rapid antigen test alone cannot confirm you have COVID-19. If your rapid antigen test is positive, you will require a second test, called a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test, to confirm your positive COVID-19 result.
- A negative result does not guarantee that you are not infected with COVID-19 or that you will not spread it to others. Continue to follow all public health guidance to help prevent the spread. For more information visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus.

Understanding Your Rapid Antigen Results

If your rapid antigen test result is positive:

- Self-isolate immediately and refer to OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus for more information on self-isolation.
- Inform your family and household members to also isolate immediately, unless they are fully vaccinated. If your household members are fully vaccinated, they are not required to self-isolate if they do not have symptoms.
- Inform your employer of your test result if they are not aware.
- Immediately book an appointment for a PCR to confirm your positive result.
  
  - **Important**: The PCR test needs to be completed within 24 hours of your positive rapid antigen test. This is because rapid antigen tests have lower accuracy compared to lab-based PCR tests. The PCR test result within 24 hours is needed for accurate interpretation.
- Stay isolated until you receive a confirmatory negative PCR test result.
- If your confirmatory PCR test is positive, continue to isolate and Ottawa Public Health will follow-up with you to provide further guidance.

***If anyone in your home develops severe symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately***

If your rapid antigen test result is negative:

- If you do not have symptoms of illness, have not been in contact with a known case of COVID-19, and are not required to isolate under The Quarantine Act following international travel, you do not need to isolate.
- Continue to follow all public health measures (masking, hand hygiene and physical distancing). Visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDWise for more information.
- This result is only valid for this point in time only. It doesn’t tell you if you had COVID-19 in the past and does not predict if you will get the virus in the future.
• If you develop new symptoms of COVID-19 since your rapid antigen test:
  o Self-isolate and follow OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus.
  o Complete a health-screening questionnaire. Visit, OttawaPublicHealth.ca/workplacescreening.
  o Get tested with a PCR test. Visit, OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDtesting.

I have symptoms of COVID-19. Do I need a Rapid Antigen Test?

• Rapid antigen tests should not be used for individuals:
  o With symptoms.
  o Who have had close contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19.
  o Who have been infected with and recovered from COVID-19 within the past 90 days.
  o To diagnose COVID-19 infection.

If you have symptoms or are a close contact of a confirmed case, you should be tested with a PCR test at an OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDcentre. You do not need a rapid antigen screening test.

You must self-isolate while awaiting your PCR results. If you are a close contact of a confirmed case, you must self-isolate for 10 days from your last exposure to the case, regardless of whether or not you receive a negative PCR result.

What if I have more questions?

Please ask your workplace or organization that provided you with a rapid antigen test for more information or visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus.

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