

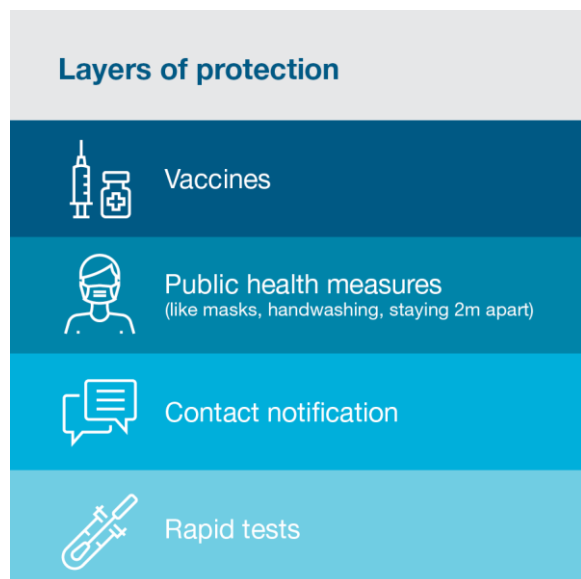
At-Home Rapid Testing Program

Information for First Nation Education Authorities

Overview

Alberta Education's Kindergarten to Grade 6 At-Home Rapid Testing Program has been extended to include all K4 to Grade 12 students attending First Nation Education Authority schools on reserve. Partnership opportunities and programs supported by Alberta Education are intended to enhance, not replace, federal government programs.

Outbreak status is not required for First Nation on reserve schools wanting to participate in the program. Rapid screening tests are another tool, along with health measures already in place at schools, to keep students and staff safe.



Rapid test screening programs can identify **pre-symptomatic** and asymptomatic cases – people who don't know they're infected with COVID-19 – so they can be isolated early to stop the spread.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the At-Home Rapid Testing Program is optional. Rapid tests will be administered at home as a screening tool for students and staff who do not have symptoms. Students and staff who choose to participate are expected to complete all five weeks of testing.

The rapid tests provided by Alberta Health as part of this program cannot be used by school staff to support a restrictions exemption program. Unvaccinated staff members who wish to enter an organization participating in a restriction exemption program must pay to obtain a negative COVID-19 test through a private vendor.

Eligibility

K4 to Grade 12 students and all school staff working at a First Nation school located on reserve are eligible to receive test kits. Non-school age children and family members are not eligible. Schools will determine how to send the tests home.

Distribution process

First Nation on reserve schools that are interested in participating in the program must submit a request form to Alberta Health. Alberta Health Services (AHS) will ship the tests directly to the school. Once the request is submitted, test kits will be shipped within two to three business days – subject to availability of test kits.

The school will receive the rapid test kits and distribute them to participating parents and staff.

It is up to the school to determine who is interested in participating in the program and how to distribute the kits. It is safe for children to put them in their backpacks.

Participating students and staff will receive 10 BTNX brand rapid tests (two boxes of five tests). Rapid tests are to be used twice a week for five weeks. It is recommended that tests are used three to four days apart; for example, conducting the rapid tests on Monday and Thursday.

Supply will be limited to 10 BTNX rapid tests per eligible student and all school staff members through this program.

Tests should only be sent out to eligible students and staff that request them. Schools will be required to report how many tests are sent out to parents/students and staff.

There is no requirement for students or staff to report the results of the rapid tests to AHS; however, the community health centre should be notified of a positive test result so that further follow-up can be initiated by community public health staff.

Schools should take into consideration the expected program participation from students and staff when ordering tests. If the school does not have an accurate estimate of how many students and staff will participate, the school should request enough tests for all eligible students and staff. Schools should hold on to tests that have not been distributed. Alberta Education will follow up with school authorities regarding reporting and unused kits.

Using the test kits

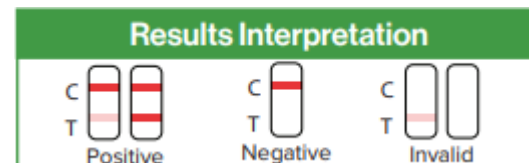
A rapid screening test nasal swab is only inserted 1.5 to 2.0 cm inside the nostril and is typically more comfortable, less invasive and less irritating than the swab usually used for a PCR COVID-19 test at an AHS testing centre.

Testing should be done twice per week, allowing 72 hours between tests. As an example, testing could be Monday and Thursday or Tuesday and Friday.

A how-to video for parents and staff will be posted on [alberta.ca/return to school](https://www.alberta.ca/return-to-school). The company supplying the tests, BTNX, also has a [how-to video](#).

Results

Example of BTNX Rapid Test Results



Negative results

A negative result does not guarantee someone does not have COVID-19 or will not become infected later. However, a negative test will give peace of mind to the family that their child can attend school. Possible false negative results are addressed when testing is repeated twice per week (allowing three days between tests) over five weeks.

It is important to follow all public health measures: physical distancing, wearing a mask, remaining in cohorts and washing hands regularly.

Positive results

With a positive rapid test result, the student or staff member will safely isolate at home for 10 days from the date the test was completed unless they receive a subsequent COVID-19 lab test from AHS or the community health centre with a negative result.

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](#) or the community health centre can confirm a COVID-19 infection.

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 or call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible or contact the community health centre.

There is no requirement for students or staff to report the results of the rapid tests to AHS; however, the community health centre should be notified of a positive test result so that further follow-up and testing can be conducted by community public health staff.

Invalid results

If the result is invalid or something went wrong with the test, users can throw the test away and start over. Schools are able to replace spoiled tests.

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 home. 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.

COVID-19 and variants

Only PCR tests can confirm if a person has COVID-19 and if it is a variant of concern. These are the tests done at an AHS assessment centre/community health centre.

Accuracy of rapid tests

Rapid screening tests are not as accurate as lab-based tests done through an AHS assessment centre or community health centre.

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 need to be confirmed by an AHS lab test or testing available at the community health centre.

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.

When a rapid COVID-19 test is used on people without symptoms, it is a screening test, not a diagnostic test. Screening individuals with rapid tests can identify some, but not all, contagious individuals and, as a result, rapid screening does not replace public health measures such as physical distancing, masking, hand hygiene, staying home and accessing testing when sick and the mandatory isolation of COVID-19 cases.

Additional questions

If you have questions about the At-Home Rapid Testing Program, please email EDC.SchoolRapidTesting@gov.ab.ca.

For the latest COVID-19 information visit www.alberta.ca/Covid19

If your school authority receives questions from parents regarding test results or health outcomes, please direct them to contact Alberta Health Link by telephone at 811.