

COVID-19 rapid antigen testing and screening in workplaces

Information for employers

Benefits of rapid testing

Rapid antigen tests are important screening tools to help you protect your employees, customers, their families and the community where they live.

Not everyone who has COVID-19 will show symptoms. Studies suggest that people without symptoms may still cause COVID-19 transmission in a significant number of cases. You can help reduce the risk of outbreaks by regularly testing and screening your employees.

Regular rapid antigen tests provide an extra layer of defence against the spread of the virus, along with COVID-safe behaviours such as frequent handwashing, physical distancing, wearing a mask and vaccination

To ensure more workers have quick and easy access to COVID-19 rapid tests, NSW Health is supporting industry partners to provide rapid antigen tests for use as part of workplace screening initiatives.

Rapid antigen tests are quick, easy and safe. They provide results in 15 minutes.

Rapid antigen test kit access and conditions

NSW Health is supporting industry partners to introduce rapid antigen tests for workers as part of the initial rollout of Rapid Antigen Testing for COVID-19.

The use of rapid antigen tests as a screening tool is another layer of protection. It's not a substitute for other public health measures. These include mask wearing, hand hygiene, getting tested if you have any symptoms, physical distancing, proper ventilation and getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Industry partners who are interested in participating in the initial rollout will be requested to:

- procure rapid antigen test kits as prescribed by NSW Health that are Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) approved
- screen employees according to the guidelines set by the TGA and in line with advice from NSW Health
- collect and report on usage when requested by NSW Health

Information collected at these pilot sites will be used to help streamline and improve the rapid antigen testing process.

For more information on how your business can take part in the Rapid Antigen Testing for COVID-19 Screening Program including test kit procurement, please contact:

NSWPATH-COVID19-RapidAntigen@health.nsw.gov.au

Workplaces that are not part of the pilot are also encouraged to implement rapid antigen testing for their workers. NSW Health Pathology has evaluated a number of kits that have been approved by the TGA and have developed a [list of endorsed products and suppliers](#) for the procurement of test kits. As the initial rollout progresses, the NSW Government will continue to provide guidance to support industry in implementing [rapid antigen testing](#).

Information for employees

Why rapid antigen testing is being implemented in your workplace

Your employer has implemented a regular workplace screening initiative to protect you, your family, your colleagues and customers.

Screening employees at least twice a week can help to quickly identify and isolate those who have COVID-19, including those who don't have any symptoms. Early identification helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace and in your community.

Rapid antigen tests detect proteins from the virus that causes COVID-19. They're quick and easy to use. Results are provided within 15 minutes.

If you've been vaccinated, you should still take part in your workplace screening initiative. The vaccines are safe and effective and can significantly reduce your chance of spreading the virus to those around you.

How is rapid antigen testing different to other testing

There are two kinds of tests, **diagnostic** and **screening** tests.

Rapid antigen tests are a **screening test** that are used to potentially identify positive cases earlier to help reduce the spread of the virus and prevent outbreaks. When used regularly, rapid antigen tests may help identify individuals who may be infectious early on. Individuals can be pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic but still carry the virus and may transmit it to others.

A standard test such as polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, is a **diagnostic test**, and can confirm if someone has COVID-19, with results available in 24 to 48 hours. These tests take a deep nasal sample and throat sample and are tested in laboratories.

A positive rapid antigen test doesn't mean you necessarily have COVID-19, it means you need to get a standard (PCR) test straight away.

If you get a positive test result

If you get a positive rapid antigen test result, you must immediately get a standard test (called a PCR test) at a NSW testing clinic to confirm the result of your screening test. Rapid antigen tests will detect most cases of COVID-19 but are not as accurate as a PCR test.

Isolate until you get a negative result from NSW Health. Isolating immediately can help break chains of transmission and limit the spread of COVID-19 at your workplace.

If you get a negative test result

Continue to follow the latest health advice and restrictions in your area.

If you develop any symptoms, even if mild, you must immediately get a standard COVID-19 test (PCR test) and isolate until you get a negative result from NSW Health.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or are a contact of someone with COVID-19

Do not undertake a rapid antigen test and do not attend the work site. You must immediately get a standard COVID-19 (PCR) test at any COVID-19 testing clinic in NSW and isolate, including from your household members, and follow the advice given by NSW Health.

The only way to rule out COVID-19 is to have a PCR test, even if you have only mild symptoms.

Is personal data collected

Any testing data collected will only be used to help NSW Health make public health decisions.

None of your personal health data is used without your consent.