



## At Home Testing Information for SHA Health Care Workers and Physicians

### Test to Protect At Home Testing Program for Health care Workers

Saskatchewan has created a strategy to expand rapid antigen testing for COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals in a variety of settings across the province. We are using rapid antigen testing as a screening test; to sort people without symptoms who probably are not infected, from those who need to be further investigated. An antigen detects viral molecules and can produce results in approximately 15 minutes.

With more contagious variants now starting to show up in our province, it is more important than ever to expand our testing options and capacity in order to limit the spread of these highly contagious viruses. Because variant strains are more transmissible, receiving point-of-care testing can detect COVID-19 to protect individuals and stop the spread to others.

Part of this expansion of testing includes providing an option for health care workers to receive training to perform rapid antigen testing, at home, on themselves and members of their household. The training and testing kits will be rolled out to the rest of the SHA in April. Learn more [here](#).

The option to take the training and participate in at home testing will be voluntary, but by knowing your status you can yourself and those around you and help maintain a safe workplace and home environment. It's important for everyone to be tested and tested regularly.

### Test to Protect At Home Testing Program for Health care Workers- Questions and Answers

#### 1. What is this and how does it differ from the point-of-care testing happening in the community?

A: Health care workers and facilities are at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19. Regular point-of-care (POC) antigen (rapid) testing has been proven as an effective way to screen for asymptomatic COVID-19. The tests are the same in community but what is different for SHA and Affiliate health care workers is that they have the option to participate and to be trained to conduct weekly point-of-care antigen testing on themselves and members of their household. Currently, this option only applies to those health care workers who have an SHA employee number. If you are a health care worker in the community interested in having POC testing in your facility, please visit the community intake process which is posted [here](#).

#### 2. How do I find more information to determine if I want to participate?

A: As a start, please visit this the [Ministry of Health Testing website](#) where you will find information about the process, how to enroll and links to training and information. If after you have enrolled or at the point of testing you and your household, you have questions, please contact the OH&S Hotline at 1-833-233-4403.

#### 3. How do I get trained to do the testing for me and my household?

A: You can register and take the online training by following the instructions outlined in the [Instructions for Accessing Online Training for Healthcare Worker Antigen Testing](#).

[Visit the Testing, Screening, Treatment and Medical Directive page for more information.](#)

Questions about the At-Home Testing Program can be sent to [HCWantigentesting@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:HCWantigentesting@saskhealthauthority.ca), but please use the form above to enroll in training.



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### 4. Once trained, how do I start and where do I get the supplies from? What is my responsibility with these supplies?

A: At the end of the training module you will be required to confirm that you have completed the modules and understand how to conduct the antigen testing on yourself. You will also be issued a certificate of completion at the end.

Supplies are available at certain times at your facility's Screening Station or designated pick up location (please inquire about times with your local station). To acquire your supplies (each supply kit comes in a box sufficient to conduct 25 tests), simply go to your screening station or pick up location, show the staff person the picture or print out of your completion of training and sign your name and show your employee ID to acquire your box of supplies. **Only one box of testing supplies per employee will be issued at a time.**

These supplies are limited and are critical to screen for asymptomatic testing in this province. It is therefore very important that the SHA and its employees demonstrate effective stewardship of these supplies. This means:

- The sale or exchange of these supplies is strictly prohibited
- The supplies are sensitive to extreme temperatures, therefore cannot be stored or transported in hot or cold environments (e.g., outside or in your car)
- If you decide to opt out of the program or have supplies you have no intention of using, please return these supplies to your Screening Station or pick up spot and sign the list available with your name, employee number and the number of testing kits/supplies you are returning.

### 5. What happens after I get the results from me and my household? What do I do to confirm and how do I screen for work now?

A: If the results of you AND your household member(s) are negative, you can simply declare this as part of your regular return to work screening (a new question about antigen testing has been added to the screening intake).

If the results of you OR your household member(s) is positive you must do the following:

1. **Arrange for a PCR test** - A PCR test is required to confirm a diagnosis of COVID-19. It is very important that the diagnostic test be done for your health as well as to put in safety measure to keep your family safe from further spread. You or the household member with the positive antigen test must either go directly to a [drive-thru testing site](#) (if applicable) or call the HealthLine 811, advising them of a positive antigen test and book an appointment as soon as possible with a testing and assessment centre to have a PCR confirmatory test conducted. Once at the testing and assessment centre, please advise the tester that you have a) tested positive for an antigen point-of-care test and b) that you are a health care worker (if this applies).
2. **Self-isolate immediately** - You are required by the law under the Public Health Act to start to self-isolate immediately to stop the spread of COVID-19 to others. We know that this is hard, and can present difficulties, but it is the best thing you can do to protect the health of your family, friends and community.
3. **Speak with Public Health** - Public Health will contact you shortly after declaring your positive POC antigen test to the test site. In the meantime, it is recommended that you and your household members create a contact tracing list. You must also follow strict self-isolation protocols.
4. **Complete next steps for testing and results** - If your results come back with a positive PCR test, Public Health



will support you and your household during this time. If your results come back negative, you/your household member(s) can return to work as usual.

### 6. What do I do with the testing waste?

A: The manufacturer does not require biohazard waste disposal for the testing waste. While this means you can throw the testing waste in your standard garbage receptacle, if you have a biohazard waste disposal process, we would encourage you to use that.

### 7. How do I get paid if I or someone in my house tests positive?

While you are waiting for the PCR confirmatory test you are required to self-isolate and during this time you will receive Pandemic paid leave. If you test positive for COVID-19 from the PCR tests, you would then be paid by Pandemic sick pay or WBC after determination of origin (e.g., community transmission or workplace transmission).

If a member of your household is PCR confirmed positive & you are deemed a close contact by OH&S, MHO, Healthline 811 or Public Health, you are entitled to Pandemic paid leave until your isolation period ends.

### 8. How often do I test myself? My household?

A: The evidence has shown that regular (weekly) testing is a great defense for screening asymptomatic COVID-19 cases. In some cases where there is an area of concern or in the case of an outbreak, more frequent testing may be suggested by Public Health and/or your health care facility.

### 9. Should I use this antigen testing on me and my household if one of us are experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms?

A: NO. These antigen tests are not for use when you have COVID-19 symptoms. If you or your household experiences COVID-19 symptoms, please follow the regular process which includes self-isolation and calling the Healthline 811 to book a PCR laboratory confirmed COVID-19 test. This is the fastest way to confirm your COVID-19 status and to ensure you and your household receives the appropriate supports for when you are presenting with symptoms.

### 10. Do I have to do this? Is this mandatory? What if I don't want to test at home?

A: This point-of-care antigen testing for screening is completely voluntary for health care workers.

### 11. What happens if I take the training and the tests and then decide I don't want to do this anymore? Can I return the unused tests and opt-out?

A: Yes! As this is voluntary, you can stop and restart at any time. Should you decide to opt-out of the program after having already completed the training and receiving testing supplies, please return any unused testing supplies to your Screening Station (filling in the list available with your name and employee number, the number of tests and other supplies you are returning).

### 12: I'm a physician and I want to do antigen testing, what do I do?

There are two potential processes for physicians interested in rapid antigen testing:

- Physicians, who are interested in providing antigen testing for their patients and/or staff through their practice, please contact us at [Antigentestingintake@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:Antigentestingintake@saskhealthauthority.ca).



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- Physicians who work on-site at SHA or Affiliate Healthcare facilities may be eligible to participate in the at-home testing program for Saskatchewan Health Authority and Affiliates Healthcare Workers. [More information about this program is available.](#)

### **13: Can a person who has had COVID use an antigen test?**

**A:** If an individual has tested positive for COVID in the last 90 days they should **not** take part in asymptomatic antigen testing. There is a good likelihood they will have positive results, and they should not be told to isolate or get subsequent PCR testing.

### **14. What is the recommendation for antigen testing in facilities/organizations where all/most of our residents/clients/etc. have been vaccinated?**

**A:** Currently the recommendations for antigen testing are the same whether an individual has been vaccinated or not. Vaccines do not prevent all infections, and while we know vaccines are very good at preventing severe disease, we do not know how well they prevent asymptomatic shedding of infectious virus. Vaccination will not interfere with antigen testing. While vaccines prevent the majority (still not 100%) of severe disease, we do not have evidence about how well they prevent asymptomatic infections, which still shed infectious virus. This is currently being studied, and that evidence is reviewed as it becomes available. As we learn more, these recommendations may change.