



At-home COVID Test Distribution Guide *August 2022*

There are many ways schools can support their communities to minimize spread of COVID-19. Providing COVID tests for students, staff and their families to use at home is one of those ways, especially in areas with little access to health care. This document is meant to be a resource for schools that are **new to distributing COVID-19 tests for home use**. Offering tests for home use provides one more tool—in addition to in-school testing and other mitigation strategies—to create a safer environment for students, staff, and families.

At-home COVID-19 tests (tests or test kits) referred to in this document are rapid antigen tests sold as “over the counter” or “OTC” that are designed for people to use outside of a clinical setting. If your district chooses to offer tests for at-home use, DHSS will provide the test kits and educational materials (see Appendix A). To receive test kits through the DHSS Antigen Testing Program, schools will complete the [application form](#). Schools will receive test kits after the application is approved and an order is submitted via the ordering portal.

Why should we distribute tests for at-home use?

- Many school-aged students remain unvaccinated, increasing the risk for spreading COVID-19.
- Offers a free resource to support a healthy community.
- Help the community feel safer as spread of COVID-19 decreases. Multiple negative test results increase the confidence that you are not infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Testing at home offers more privacy than testing in a community setting, such as a school.

How should we distribute tests for at-home use?

Schools may distribute antigen tests for at-home use in a number of ways. **Each district needs to decide which method would best meet their needs.** Options include but are not limited to:

- 1) **By request**—tests are distributed to a parent/guardian or staff member upon request from a centralized location, such as the main office or school health office.
 - a. Examples include:
 - i. Sending test kits home with students that present with COVID-like symptoms at school. Providing extra kits will enable others in the home to be able to test in the event a family member has a positive test result.
 - ii. Making test kits available for pick-up if a parent/guardian communicates a need for a test to use for a student who became ill while at home. Some schools have used a “drive-through” pick-up option for distribution in this method of delivery.

- iii. Sending extra test kits home with a student following a positive test at school. These tests may be used to test the student prior to their return to school (after day 5) or may be used for other family members who may have been exposed. See CDC guidance for ending isolation <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>.
- 2) **Mass distribution**—send test kits home with students in their backpacks for parents to have on-hand should a need to use arise.
- a. Examples include:
 - i. Sending out a school-wide message informing parents/guardians of the planned distribution, with an option to “opt-in” to receive tests or “opt-out” if they do not want/need the tests.
 - ii. Sending test kits home on a pre-set schedule (e.g. on the 1st Friday of every other month). The same considerations about notification of the plan to parents/guardians apply.
 - iii. Making test kits available for distribution for anyone that wants one at school events, such as back-to-school night, parent/teacher conferences, sporting events, or other similar events.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a CLIA waiver and do I need one?

A Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments of 1988 (CLIA) Certificate of Waiver is required when a school chooses to administer COVID-19 testing on-site or to assist with interpreting COVID-19 test results. Schools sending home OTC antigen tests exclusively do not need a CLIA Certificate of Waiver as all tests will be sent home for use.

Is the district required to report results of tests sent home to the state?

No reporting is required by the district regarding tests sent home for use at home. Many local public health agencies have set-up online reporting for OTC COVID tests. Check with your local public health agency for reporting so you are prepared to answer questions from parents or staff.

Last year my district ordered a supply of ACON FlowFlex antigen tests for home distribution. Can I still use those?

You may continue to send home the Acon *FlowFlex* tests you **have on-hand** for home distribution. However, future orders through the state’s antigen testing program intended for home distribution will be iHealth rapid antigen tests.

Has ACON extended the expiration date of their FlowFlex antigen tests?

ACON announced extended expiration dates 4 months past the date printed on the box for ACON *FlowFlex* antigen tests. For up-to-date information regarding the extended dates of expiration:

<https://www.aconlabs.com/flowflex-covid-19-antigen-home-test-new-shelf-life-extension/>.

Has ihealth extended the expiration date of their antigen test?

The FDA has granted iHealth COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test an extension of test expiration dates. To see the extensions: <https://www.fda.gov/media/158007/download>.

How do I dispose of expired tests?

Verify that the test is truly past the extended expiration date (see information above). Expired tests may be disposed of in the same manner as your regular trash.

My supply of antigen tests is more than I can use. What can a district do with extra tests?

If the tests will not expire for many months, consider keeping the tests in the event of a surge in cases. If the tests are not expired, and the district does not think they will use them, they may give the tests to a neighboring school district. If you have any questions or unsure how to locate another school participating in the testing program, please email antigentesting@health.mo.gov.

Using COVID-19 Antigen Tests

Why am I getting this COVID-19 test kit?

You are getting this at-home test kit because you or your child are part of the _____ School District who is partnering with Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to make rapid antigen tests available for Missouri students, staff and their families. Having tests on-hand makes it possible to test as soon as possible after [symptoms](#) start, as is recommended. Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19, to other people.

When should I use this test?

- 1) Use the test provided if someone in your home has new symptoms that might be a COVID-19 infection, even if there was no known exposure to another person diagnosed with COVID-19.

Possible symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

- 2) Use the test if someone in your home has been exposed to COVID-19. CDC currently recommends testing the person who was exposed at least 5 days after their last contact with the positive individual. See full [CDC guidance regarding precautions](#) to take if exposed to COVID.

Do not wait to conduct an at-home test if, at any time, you or your child has difficulty breathing (for example, cannot speak in full sentences without stopping to take a breath) or is experiencing other emergency symptoms. Instead, **call 911** or **go to an emergency room**. If you have any concerns about non-emergency symptoms you or your child is experiencing, contact your health care provider.

Where should I store this test?

Store your test kits at room temperature, ideally out of reach of small children or pets.

How do I use this test?

Each test kit includes instructions for using the at-home antigen test. Read through the steps before testing to get familiar with the testing process. **We have also included a simpler version of the instructions.** Visit <https://nrccrim.org/toolkits/testing#AtHomeTesting> for test instructions in multiple languages

Stay home when sick

People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, should stay home. For more information on staying home when sick with COVID-19, including recommendations for isolation and mask use for people who test positive or who are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, see [Isolate If You Are Sick](#).

People who are [at risk for getting very sick](#) with COVID-19 who test positive should consult with a health care provider right away for possible treatment, even if their symptoms are mild.

Who should you notify of the positive result?

- Notify your doctor and discuss any health concerns you may have.
- Notify your child's school with the date your child became ill (or the date of their positive test if they do not have symptoms).
- Notify close contacts of the possible exposure and their need to monitor themselves for symptoms:
 1. Determine who was a close contact. A close contact is someone the positive person was:
 - Within 6 feet of
 - For 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period
 - Starting 2 days before the symptoms started (or the date tested positive)
 - Regardless of mask use or vaccination status
 2. When considering who to notify, think about home, work, school, afterschool or extracurricular programs, worship, and recreation. People you spend the most time with are at the most risk of becoming ill.