

F.A.Q.S **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Rapid Antigen Screening Kits: Frequently Asked Questions

Abbott Rapid Panbio Antigen Screening

The Newmarket Chamber of Commerce is offering Rapid Antigen Self-Screening Kits free of charge to local businesses with less than 150 employees as part of a partnership with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Chamber of Commerce and provincial and federal governments.

The goal of the program is to help identify asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic cases of COVID-19 in the workplace that might otherwise be missed.

Why test at work?

Information from Health Canada suggests up to one-third of people carrying the COVID-19 virus are asymptomatic with little to no noticeable symptoms. Over 50% of known COVID-19 cases were transmitted by an asymptomatic carrier. This makes it incredibly important to find asymptomatic carriers in order to combat the spread of COVID in our workplaces and our communities. Frequent screening with rapid antigen tests increases the chances of early identification of cases in asymptomatic individuals ONLY. Recommended frequency is twice per employee, per week.

Who can businesses give screening kits to and who can we screen?

Screening kits are for use to screen your asymptomatic employees only. You are not allowed to give them to anyone and you cannot screen anyone other than your employees with them. (For example, you cannot use these kits to screen customers, clients, patients, etc.).

Employees have the right to refuse to be screened. When an employee agrees to be screened, they are also giving their consent for you to collect and report the results.

What is the accuracy of these screens?

The screening kits are highly accurate - in the range of 90% accurate however, compared to a regular COVID-19 test, Panbio™ has a higher risk of false positive results and false negative results.

This is why **NO ONE SHOWING SYMPTOMS** should be screened using these screening kits, as a false negative result could put the organization at risk of exposure. Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must get a PCR test and follow public health guidelines.

How do we dispose of the test waste?

The screen pad and vial (with the swab and buffering agent in) are considered hazardous waste. Some businesses may have the ability to dispose of this material safely. If not, then the Chamber has a disposal bin to appropriately dispose of this waste that can be accessed when refilling your order.

How is the screening administered?

Rapid Antigen Screening is a non-invasive nasal swab. The swab must be inserted into each nostril 2 cm (1 inch) for 5 to 7 seconds, while ensuring the inside of the nostril is wiped by the swab for that time.

Who can perform the screen on an individual?

Employees must do their own screenings; no one should perform a screening on anyone else. The Screening Supervisor is present during the screenings to instruct employees and ensure the procedure is followed for an accurate result.

What is the reporting responsibility our business has with respect to the results of the screens?

As per the agreement, you are responsible for reporting all results of your screens (this is a mandatory part of participation in this program). Required data to be reported: total number of screens completed, total number of positive results, total number of negative results, and total number of inconclusive results. The reporting form is available at www.newmarketchamber.ca/rapidtests

Who can pick up the screening kits?

Due to safety protocols and to simplify the process as much as possible, we ask that just one person (the Screening Supervisor) picks up the kit from the Chamber.

When can I pick up my order?

Please wait until you have been contacted by the Chamber with a pick-up day and time. Please do not visit outside this time.

If an employee has a positive or inconclusive result, what is the next step?

Anyone who receives a result of positive or inconclusive from the screening kit **MUST** immediately self-isolate and contact local Public Health for a PCR Test within 24 hours. Individuals with a positive or inconclusive result cannot be permitted in the workplace until there is a confirmed (by Public Health) negative test result.

It is **REQUIRED** that the employee notify Public Health with any positive results immediately.

We will be reporting from the Newmarket Chamber website to the Ministry of Health and Health Canada for data collection.

Can other people in the organization be trained to supervise the screening process?

At this point, the Ministry of Health requires that a trained individual supervises the screening process. Prior to picking up your order, you are required to watch a training video. This video can be used as a refresher and/or to train other supervisors.

What is the frequency we should be screening our employees?

The recommendation from public health is that all employees should be screened twice per week.

Some businesses may want to test their employees more frequently because of the setting or higher frequency of close contact. If that is the case for your business, please contact the Chamber and we will try to fulfill the order if possible. Providing screening kits to test more frequently will affect our supply and we will need notice in order to alert our supplier.

Conversely, some businesses may want to test employees less frequently or may have a variety of employee schedules to consider. It is the responsibility of each business to determine frequency of screening. Please put the safety of your employees first, which will help to ensure you have a safe workplace.

Do these kits have an expiry date?

The screening kits do expire. We will advise businesses if the screening kits are close to expiring.

Using the kits after they expire is not advisable as their accuracy may be compromised. Caution should be taken to review the box and ensure the kits are not expired.

Do we only screen employees who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms?

These self-screening kits are meant for use with asymptomatic employees only. Anyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must be kept OUT of the workplace and must not be allowed to return until local public health provides a confirmed negative result from a diagnostic PCR Test and all public health guidelines have been adhered to.

It is allergy season and people are experiencing symptoms similar to COVID-19. Should we avoid screening people that may be experiencing allergy symptoms, or should we screen them regardless?

Again, anyone showing symptoms that are similar to COVID-19 could in fact be infectious and should not be screened using these rapid screening kits; they should be immediately contact public health for a PCR assessment.

While we recognize some symptoms can resemble allergies, it is important that these symptoms are not ignored or overlooked as there could be a risk to the organization.

I am a consultant that works with clients on workplace safety. Can I order screening kits on behalf of my clients and screen their employees?

No. These screening kits are provided free of charge to small- and medium-sized businesses for their sole purpose. A designated employee must be assigned the responsibility of taking the supervisor training, ensuring proper screening processes are adhered to and reporting the results of the screening kits on behalf of the employer. While there are avenues available for third party vendors to purchase their own kits outside of this program to provide screening services, the Chamber's program is intended to remain complimentary and direct to employer only.

Can I purchase extra kits so I can screen those I want to? If so, how much do the screening kits cost?

No. The screening kits are not for sale, and we are not authorized to charge anyone for these kits. When picking up your order, you will be required to sign a document stipulating that you not sell or distribute these screening kits.

The value of the box of 25 kits is approximately \$200 based on known retail information. The screening kits are expensive, and we are able to offer the kits at no cost to businesses because they are funded by the Federal and Provincial Governments.

I am a volunteer/employee for an organization we have a number of volunteers that would like to meet regularly in-person. Can these kits be used for that purpose?

No. The screening kits are not to be used to validate or substantiate not following public health guidelines. The kits are not intended to be used to verify negative carriers so that restrictions issued by the province or local public health can be waived. Any person who screens presumptive negative, MUST continue to follow public health measures of distancing, washing their hands, wearing a mask properly, and adhering to public health gathering orders.

Some of our employees are required to travel for business. Can these screening kits validate them for travel?

No. While these screening kits are extremely reliable, they are not a tool for travel or usurping any Federal, Provincial or International guidelines.

I noticed there are two packages marked “Control Swabs” in each box of screening kits. What do we use them for?

Contained in each box of screening kits, you will find two “Control Swabs”; one of those swabs will produce a negative result and the other swab will produce a positive result. These control swabs are ONLY to be used for quality control purposes. If you are finding that the results of screening kits from a particular box are not showing up on the testing pads, then you can follow the process in the manual provided to do a quality control check of the pads by simply following the same testing regime. DO NOT SWAB ANYONE WITH THESE CONTROL SWABS; the swabs already have ingredients on them to produce results in the quality control process.

While the positive control swab will show positive for COVID-19, there is nothing on the swab that is infectious or that will pass COVID-19 to a person. It is a pre-loaded swab and should not be used for anything other than quality control, if required.

For additional questions not addressed here, please call us at 905-898-5900 ext 228.