



## Testing

### **Who should get tested for COVID-19?**

Everyone should get tested for COVID-19 regularly, even if you don't feel sick. It's one of the layers of protection we need to we live safely with covid, just like wearing masks, washing hands, and physical distancing.

### **Can people get tested while they are self-isolating after travel?**

Yes. If you are isolating after travel, you should get tested on day 1 or 2 and again on day 12, 13 or 14. You are allowed to leave isolation for this testing. You must still complete 14 days of self-isolation, even with negative test results. However, you don't have to wait for the second negative test result in order to leave isolation on you 15<sup>th</sup> day in Nova Scotia.

### **What does symptomatic versus asymptomatic testing mean?**

Symptomatic means you feel sick or have symptoms. Asymptomatic means you don't feel sick or have symptoms. Either way, you may or may not have the virus. People who are asymptomatic and have the virus can spread it to other people.

Most infected people show symptoms within five to six days. The time between infection and the onset of symptoms can range from one to 14 days.

### **What is the purpose of testing people who don't have symptoms?**

The purpose is to detect positive cases in people who do not have symptoms before the virus spreads widely. People should make it part of their routine to get tested, even if you don't think you need to.

### **What should you do if you think you have COVID-19 symptoms?**

You need to get tested if you think you have symptoms. Follow the directions in the [online self-assessment and book a test](#). Only call 811 if you can't do the assessment online.

### **What should you do if you only have mild symptoms?**

You should still get tested. Even if you only have a tickle at the back of your throat or a runny nose, don't assume it's just a cold. Get tested to be sure it is not COVID-19. Follow the directions in the [online self-assessment and book a test](#). Only call 811 if you can't do the assessment online.

### **Do people have to self-isolate if they are getting tested?**

People should continue to self-isolate until they receive a negative result if they were tested because:

- they have symptoms
- they were at a potential exposure site
- they were advised by public health that they were a close contact or needed to self-isolate until receiving test results

Their household should also isolate until contacted.

Close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases and people who were present at high-risk exposure locations are required to self-isolate for a full 14 days, regardless of their test result. In addition, anyone



who becomes unwell should assume that they have COVID-19, isolate along with their household and arrange testing.

If you have new or worsening symptoms, do not wait for Public Health to contact you. Seek health advice as needed. For routine care, contact your primary care provider or 811. For urgent care, call 911 or visit the nearest emergency department.

If you have further questions about this, you should direct them to [coronavirus@nshealth.ca](mailto:coronavirus@nshealth.ca) or check their [website for testing information](#).

**If I test negative, does that mean I don't have so self-isolate after travel?**

No. Self-isolation is still required if you come from outside Nova Scotia and you don't have an exemption from the self-isolation requirement.

**How often should people get tested?**

How often you get tested depends on how much you're in contact with other people. If you have a lot of social interactions or are around a lot of people at work, you should get test more frequently. People who have less contact with others should still get tested but less frequently.

**What does a negative test result mean?**

A negative test result is not definitive but it is a good indication that a person is not likely carrying and transmitting the virus unknowingly on the day of the test. A person could test positive the next day, though. People who receive a negative test result must continue to follow public health measures and if they develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate and [book a test](#).

**Where can I get tested?**

- There are primary assessment centres around the province. Appointments are required for these sites and can be [booked online](#). Only call 811 if you can't book online.
- In addition, there are pop-up sites in different locations around the province. Because they use rapid tests, the age limit is 16 and over at these sites. Only people with no symptoms can use pop-up sites. See locations on the [NSHA's website](#).

**How does the testing process work? When do you get results? What do you do if your results haven't arrived?**

Check the NSHA website for more information about [how COVID-19 testing works](#).

**Can my employer ask for my test result?**

There could be circumstances where an employer might be able to require a negative test result from an employee as a condition of permitting the employee to return to the workplace. For example, If the employer has reason to believe that the employee may have COVID because they are exhibiting symptoms or that the employee should be self-isolating for other reasons, they might ask for reasonable proof to the contrary, such as a negative COVID test result. If you have further questions, you could contact the Safety Division at the Department of Labour and Advanced Education at 1-800-952-2687 or [LAESafetybranch@novascotia.ca](mailto:LAESafetybranch@novascotia.ca).



**Will a business, hotel or apartment/condo building be contacted if there is a case?**

Public health will only contact a business, a hotel or an apartment/condo building if they are not able to reach all the close contacts of a case directly. If public health contacts you, follow their direction and send any questions to them. If they do not contact you and you do not think you are a close contact, there is nothing further for you to do except respect people's privacy.

**I have questions about an exposure notice, who do I contact?**

Please direct your question to [coronavirus@nshealth.ca](mailto:coronavirus@nshealth.ca).

**How do I know if I am a close contact?**

Public health contacts all new cases directly. They are no longer contacting people who are deemed to have lower risk exposure and are identified as low or moderate risk contacts of the case.

Public health will contact higher risk close contacts of a case. In some situations, you may receive a letter or a text rather than a phone call with instructions to self-isolate and get tested. A public health nurse will follow up by phone. However, this may take longer than the usual 72 hours.

If you think you may be a close contact and public health has not contacted you, please get tested and self-isolate until you receive a negative result. Identify yourself as close contact when you book your appointment.

DO NOT go directly to a COVID-19 primary assessment centre or a mobile unit site. You must make an appointment. DO NOT go to a pop-up rapid testing location. You can walk, drive, bike or taxi to your appointment. DO NOT take the bus or ferry. If you need help with transportation, let us know when booking your appointment.

**ASYMPTOMATIC TESTING BY PRAXES FOR ESSENTIAL TRAVEL**

**What kind of testing is available for essential travel purposes?**

[PRAXES](#) and [Switchhealth](#) offer COVID-19 testing for people who do not have symptoms and require a negative test result for essential travel. Essential travel does **not** include vacations or traveling for business that can be done virtually. Contact these companies more information.

**Can I do the COVID-19 self-assessment to get an asymptomatic test? Can I call 811 to get this test?**

No. The Nova Scotia Health Authority does testing to manage the pandemic in Nova Scotia. If you need a test for travel purposes, you need to get it from [PRAXES](#) or [Switchhealth](#).

**Can I get tested so that I don't have to complete my self-isolation in Nova Scotia?**

No, a COVID-19 test does not eliminate the self-isolation requirement for people coming into Nova Scotia from outside Atlantic Canada.

**Will you offer antibodies testing as required by China? Can you give results in 48 hours?**

We do not provide serological testing to detect antibodies at this time. Companies offering testing for essential travel cannot guarantee test results within 48 hours.



## **RAPID TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **Can workplaces use the rapid tests that the federal government is making available?**

Point of care screening tests, also known as rapid tests, can serve as an added layer of protection to prevent the introduction and transmission of COVID-19 in workplaces.

Any businesses or other organization that wants to offer an asymptomatic rapid testing program their workplace must first develop a plan and get approval from the Department of Health and Wellness.