



Testing

Can people get tested while they are self-isolating after travel? Can I get tested so that I don't have to complete my self-isolation?

People who were fully vaccinated at least 14 days before arriving in Nova Scotia do not have to isolate. People who are not fully vaccinated can leave isolation to get tested. If they are not fully vaccinated, they must get 2 negative PCR tests results in order to stop isolating after 7 days.

What does symptomatic versus asymptomatic testing mean?

Symptomatic means you feel sick or have symptoms. 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.

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.

Who can get an asymptomatic test?

You need to book an asymptomatic test if you are in one of the following situations:

- I was at one of the exposure sites at the date and time identified in a recent Public Health public service announcement.
- I was in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 during the last 14 days.
- I have been outside of Nova Scotia in the last 14 days.
- I am scheduled for a medical procedure at a hospital and need a test prior to my appointment.
- I tested positive for COVID-19 on a rapid test and need to confirm my result.
- I was directed by Public Health to get tested.

Should people continue doing regular asymptomatic testing?

Now that we have a highly vaccinated population, regular asymptomatic testing is no longer recommended or available. People who are fully vaccinated and practicing healthy habits to avoid respiratory illnesses are at low risk for COVID-19.

Asymptomatic testing will still be available for certain reasons, such as incoming travelers and close contacts of confirmed cases. We will continue to target asymptomatic testing with mobile units and pop up sites as needed in communities where there are high cases and signs of community spread. If pop ups or mobile units are not in your area, that means you likely don't need asymptomatic testing.

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.

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

If you have symptoms or you were directed by public health to get tested, you should self-isolate until they receive a negative result. If you have further questions about this, you should direct them to the Nova Scotia Health Authority via 1-800-430-9557 or covidquestions@nshealth.ca or check their [website for testing information](#).



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.
- Mobile units and pop-up sites will be in different locations around the province as needed. See locations and more information on the [Nova Scotia Health Authority website](#).
- Testing is available in Halifax and Sydney airports for incoming travelers arriving by air. In Halifax, take-home PCR tests are available for people who are required to have one (specialized, rotational workers, people who are not fully vaccinated and want to stop isolating after 7 days). Take-home rapid tests are available for other travelers. In Sydney, only PCR tests are available.

If general asymptomatic testing is no longer available, how can I get a test for travel purposes?

The Nova Scotia Health Authority only offered general asymptomatic testing to help manage the pandemic. People were never supposed to book tests at their sites for travel purposes. If your travel destination requires a negative test result, you need to contact [PRAXES](#) or [Switch Health](#) for information about their testing services.

Where can I get take home rapid tests?

Rapid test kits are not generally available to buy or pick up in Nova Scotia. They are being distributed at pop up testing sites and mobile units that are deployed to communities where there are high cases and signs of community spread. Incoming travelers can get them at the Halifax airport. Test kits were distributed to public school students in pre-primary to grade 6 as part of a pilot project.

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.

How does the NSHA 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](#). If you still have questions, you can direct them to coronavirus@nshealth.ca.

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, Skills and Immigration at 1-800-952-2687 or LAESafetybranch@novascotia.ca.

How do I know if I am a close contact?

Public health contacts all new cases directly. They also 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. Check the NSHA website for [more information](#).

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.

AIRPORT TESTING

Which kind of test is offered at the airport?

In Halifax, PCR take-home tests are available for people who are required to have one (specialized, rotational workers, people with 1 dose of vaccine who want to stop isolating after 7 days). Take-home rapid tests are available for other travelers. In Sydney, only PCR take-home tests are available.

How does testing at the airport work?

After travelers get their bags, they line up to either pick up their test or opt out of testing. Travelers doing a PCR test need to complete their swab within 48 hours of arriving in the province and drop it off at a [primary assessment centre](#).

If I am a rotational worker or specialized worker, will this test count towards one of my mandatory tests?

Rotational workers, specialized workers and temporary foreign workers can get a take-home PCR test at Halifax and Sydney airports. This is lab-verified, it counts towards one of their mandatory tests.

What do I do if I'm not comfortable doing my own swab or if I can't drop off it at one of the PACs?

If you need a PCR test but you don't want to do the swab yourself or don't have the ability to drop off your swab at one of the PACs, then you should opt out of testing at the airport and [book an appointment](#) instead.

Why can't travelers leave the swab at the airport?

Given the volume of travelers now coming through the airport, there would be long lines and wait times if everyone did their swab onsite.

I don't want to be tested at all at the airport. Do I need to opt out?

Testing is voluntary but you will need to opt out before leaving the airport.





RAPID TESTING IN THE WORKPLACE

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

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.