

COVID-19 Information Sheet: Rapid Antigen Testing as a Screening Tool for Frontline Staff

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

Current as of January 19, 2022

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide information about the use of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) by frontline staff in City-operated and City-funded shelters. This document also applies to frontline shelter staff who provide services to clients in the community and daytime drop-ins.

When to use Rapid Antigen Tests

- RATs can be used during regular operations or suspected/confirmed outbreaks.
- RATs can be used **daily** by frontline staff as an additional screening measure. Use of RATs for screening is **voluntary**.
- RATs can be used as part of daily screening (i.e., prior to each shift) by staff who are fully vaccinated, asymptomatic, and are not a close contact of a positive case. If staff are symptomatic or identified as close contacts, they should follow recommendations for testing and isolation for [outbreak management](#).
- RATs can be used to support **return to work policies** as outlined by the [Ontario Ministry of Health](#) or your organization.
- RATs are not a substitute for vaccination or daily symptom screening. However, they do provide an additional layer of protection by identifying individuals with a positive COVID-19 RAT result to prevent them from entering the workplace where they could transmit the virus to their co-workers and clients.

What staff should do

- Review the information on RATs, and self-administration of the tests prior to use.
- Familiarize themselves with the Ontario Health [How to test yourself with Panbio™ COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening Test At Home](#) document and watch the Ontario Health video on self-administration of a Rapid Antigen Test ([COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test Training Video](#)). This test requires a swab of both nostrils.
- Sign the Attestation form (see Appendix 1). The RAT is supplied in kits of 25 tests which means employees must commit to ongoing usage of the test to avoid waste. RATs provided to employees are for use by **employees only** as part of the pre-shift screening process.
- Self-administer the Rapid Antigen Test at home by following the instructions provided by Panbio™, prior to coming in to the workplace.
- Complete the test at least one or two hours before the start of your shift to leave enough time to report the results to your supervisor if you are unable to attend your scheduled shift. Self-administration of the test will take approximately five minutes to complete. Results are available within approximately 15 minutes.
- Complete the daily [COVID-19 Staff and Visitor Screening Form for Homelessness Service Settings](#) which includes a question about RAT results prior to each shift.

Where to get Rapid Antigen Tests

Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits have been distributed to homelessness service providers for employee use. The existing supply of kits should be sufficient for all front line staff to for two weeks to one month. If you need additional RATs, please contact your Agency Review Officer, or ssha.homeless@toronto.ca.

Please note:

Public health guidance related to Rapid Antigen Testing is evolving and may be updated. Future changes will be communicated as information becomes available. RAT home kits may include brands other than Panbio™ that are administered differently. Please carefully review the instructions provided for the kits you are using and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully to ensure the most accurate results.

Additional Resources

- Ontario Ministry of Health [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#)
- Ontario Health [How to test yourself with Panbio™ COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening Test At Home](#)
- Ontario Health [COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test Training Video](#)
- SSHA [COVID-19 Staff and Visitor Screening Form for Homelessness Service Settings](#)
- Ontario [COVID-19 Worker and Employee Screening Tool](#)
- Appendix 1: Rapid Antigen Testing Attestation Form
- Appendix 2: Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix 1: Rapid Antigen Testing Program Attestation Form

Supervisor Name: _____

Issues the following:

- One (1) box of 25 Panbio™ COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests

I, _____ acknowledge the receipt of 25
(please print your first and last name)

Rapid Antigen Tests for use as part of the voluntary Rapid Antigen Testing Program. I agree to participate in the program as outlined in the COVID-19 Information Sheet: Rapid Antigen Testing as a Screening Tool for Frontline Staff. I further acknowledge that these tests are to be used solely by me for the purpose of pre-shift screening.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Rapid Antigen Test?

A Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) detects protein fragments specific to the COVID-19 virus. It is intended to be a tool used by asymptomatic individuals as an enhancement to the pre-shift screening process. The Panbio™ COVID-19 RAT is the type being supplied at this time by the City. It requires a swab of both nostrils.

How do I get a supply of Rapid Antigen Tests?

Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) kits have been distributed to homelessness service providers for employee use. The existing supply of kits should be sufficient for all front line staff for two week to a month. If you need additional RATs, please contact your Agency Review Officer, or ssha.homeless@toronto.ca. Supervisors should complete the Rapid Antigen Testing Program Attestation Form (Appendix 1) and distribute the RAT kits to employees.

What should I do with signed Rapid Antigen Testing Program Attestation Forms?

Supervisors should store signed Rapid Antigen Testing Program Attestation Forms at their organization or site, and follow their organization's policies for retention.

Can I use a Rapid Antigen Test on my family member?

No. Rapid Antigen Tests provided to employees are for use by employees only as part of the pre-shift screening process.

What training do I have to do?

You should familiarize yourself with the Ontario Health [How to test yourself with Panbio™ COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening Test At Home](#) document and watch the Ontario Health video on self-administration of a Rapid Antigen Test ([COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test Training Video](#)). This test requires a swab of both nostrils.

When should I complete the Rapid Antigen Test?

You should complete the test before the start of your shift and leave enough time to report the results to your supervisor if your results indicate you are unable to attend your scheduled shift. Please adhere to the required length of time to report an absence specified by your organization or collective agreement(s).

How long do the results take?

Self-administration of the test will take approximately five minutes to complete. Results are available within approximately 15 minutes.

What if I have a positive Rapid Antigen Test result?

As per [provincial guidance](#), a positive result on a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) during the Omicron surge is considered a confirmed positive result. Positive RAT results do not require PCR / rapid molecular confirmatory testing.

Individuals with a positive RAT result must notify their direct supervisor as they normally would and adhere to all public health and safety measures (e.g., self-isolate at home). Service providers are required to notify Toronto Public Health if a staff member tests

positive for COVID-19 through regular reporting processes including via TPHshelters@toronto.ca.

What if I have symptoms, but tested negative on the Rapid Antigen Test?

If you have symptoms, you should not be reporting for work. Individuals experiencing symptoms should complete the [COVID-19 Staff and Visitor Screening Form for Homelessness Service Settings](#), notify their direct supervisor as they normally would, and adhere to all public health and safety measures (e.g., self-isolate at home).

If I complete a Rapid Antigen Test, do I still have to complete a screening tool?

Staff should complete the [COVID-19 Staff and Visitor Screening Form for Homelessness Service Settings](#) prior to each shift. The screening tool includes a question asking if you have tested positive on a Rapid Antigen Test.

How do I dispose of used Rapid Antigen Tests?

Rapid Antigen Test kits can be bagged and disposed with normal household waste. For more information please visit toronto.ca/wastewizard or your local municipality.

How do I store the Rapid Antigen Tests?

Panbio™ COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Tests need to be kept between 2 degrees Celsius and 30 degrees Celsius in accordance with the Provincial Antigen Screening Program.

Will these tests cost me anything?

No. The Rapid Antigen Test kits are provided at no cost to staff participating in the Rapid Antigen Testing program.