



COVID-19 home use tests

This fact sheet explains how to use and interpret the results from COVID-19 home use tests (also known as COVID-19 rapid antigen self-tests).

What is a COVID-19 home use test (rapid antigen self-test)?

Home use tests for COVID-19 test a nasal swab, saliva, or oral fluid sample for the presence of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Home use tests can be used anywhere, including at home or work. They can be used without the involvement of a doctor or health professional. Most tests produce a result within 10-20 minutes.

When should I use the test?

The tests are more reliable when used by a person with COVID-19 symptoms, and less reliable when used by a person without symptoms. **IMPORTANT:** Home use tests are not as accurate as tests done in the laboratory (called PCR tests).

Where can I get a test?

Home use tests are available from pharmacies, supermarkets, retail outlets and online.

Only tests approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) are legally permitted to be sold in Australia. The TGA

website has a list of all the approved home use tests, along with a copy of the manufacturer's instructions for each test.

The list of approved tests is available at: <https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia>

How do I use the test?

Many home use tests are available and each one is different. It is important to follow the steps in the instructions provided with the test you use.

It is important you **do not eat, drink, smoke, brush your teeth or chew gum for 10–30 minutes** (refer to the instructions provided with your test kit for the recommended timing) **before collecting saliva** for a home use test as it may produce an incorrect result.

Not using the test properly may produce an incorrect result.

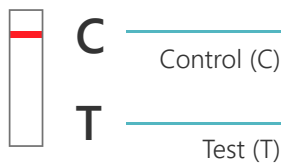
All tests are for single use only which means you can only use each test **ONCE** and then it must be thrown away. Do not ever use a test more than once or attempt to use one test on different people.

Wash your hands after completing the test and disposing of the test kit contents.

What do the test results look like?

Most results will be displayed in a window on the device. The instructions provided with the test will explain what the result means.

For example the results could look like this:



Negative Result



A second line even if faint is a positive result

What do I do if I get a positive result?

If you get a positive result it is recommended that you stay at home. Check the information provided by your [state or territory health department](#) to find out what you need to do. This includes whether you need to report your result and quarantine requirements. If you are unwell you should seek medical assistance.

What do I do if I get a negative result?

If you get a negative result it is less likely that you have COVID-19, but continue to follow all public health advice on limiting the spread of the virus.

If you feel unwell or have symptoms you should get a PCR test as soon as possible.

What do I do if I get an 'invalid' result?

Home use tests may produce an 'invalid' result, which means it has not worked correctly. If this happens, you should throw it away and do another home use test, or if you are unwell and have symptoms, get a PCR test at a testing site.

How regularly should I use home use tests?

This will depend on the recommendations and requirements of the state or territory you live in. Check your [state or territory Health Departments website](#) for information.

Can home use tests be used for children?

Tests on children should always be done or supervised by an adult. See the instructions provided with the test for any safety instructions for using the test on a child.

How do I dispose of a home use test?

This will vary according to information provided with the tests. Some tests come with a plastic bag to place the contents of the test into (including the swab). This bag is then placed into another bag for disposal with your household rubbish.

If no bags are provided you can place the used items from the test into a small plastic bag that can be sealed. This bag should be put into another bag that can be sealed and disposed of with your household rubbish.

Wash your hands carefully after completing the test and disposing of the test kit contents.

Other things to consider

What are the concerns with home use tests and are they accurate?

Home use tests are not as accurate as PCR tests, but they are very helpful because they provide results quickly. They can also pick up the COVID-19 virus very early in the infection, sometimes before you have symptoms.

Where there are low rates of COVID-19, the tests are less accurate as there is a higher risk of both false positive and false negative results.

Do the recommendations vary between jurisdictions?

The use of different types of COVID-19 tests and what you're required to do if you get a positive result may vary in each state and territory. [Further information](#) is available on their websites.

Reporting problems

If there is a problem with the test, you should report it to the supplier or sponsor. You should be able to see the sponsor contact details on the label.

You can also report problems with home use tests to the TGA online at [tga.gov.au/reporting-problems](https://www.tga.gov.au/reporting-problems)



More information:

For information on the use of home use tests and what to do if you test positive, follow the advice in your state or territory. Links are available at [COVID-19 testing](#) on the Department of Health website.

For information about the COVID-19 home use test regulatory process for sponsors and manufacturers, Please contact us at COVIDtests@tga.gov.au or call **1800 141 144**