

When do you need a COVID-19 test?

Testing for COVID-19 is widely available in Massachusetts. Find a testing location near you and visit [About COVID-19 Testing](#) to learn about the different types of COVID-19 tests, when to test, and what to do if you test positive.

There are two types of COVID-19 tests that are widely available to the public: rapid antigen tests, which are available as take-home tests and can be self-administered, and PCR tests, which are a clinically administered test, such as those at the Commonwealth's Stop the Spread testing sites.

DPH advises that rapid antigen tests are an acceptable alternative to a PCR test in most situations, including in the following scenarios:

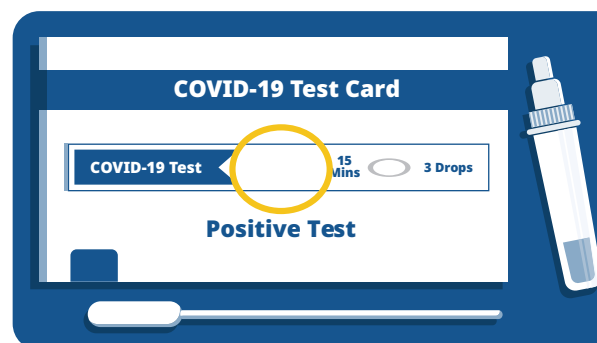
- To exit isolation or quarantine, in line with DPH guidance
- To receive therapeutics like monoclonal antibodies or antiviral medications if the patient is at high risk for severe outcomes

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests:

Rapid antigen tests (such as at-home testing kits) can be easily used, and the results are available in as few as 15 minutes.

Where to get one:

- Over the counter at local pharmacies, such as CVS or Walgreens
- Other retailers, such as Amazon or Walmart
- They may also be distributed through employers, municipal programs, school districts and other community partners.
- Mail order tests from the federal government:
 - The Biden Administration has made free at-home COVID-19 rapid tests available to all residents through a new web-based ordering platform.
 - Each household is entitled to 4 testing kits through this program.
 - These rapid antigen at-home tests can be ordered from the U.S. Post Office at [COVID Home Tests | USPS](#).



Health Insurance Coverage for Rapid Antigen Tests

- Rapid antigen (at-home) tests are now covered by insurance, as required by the federal government. For more information on that coverage, please visit [How to get your At-Home Over-The-Counter COVID-19 Test for Free | CMS.gov](#).
- Health Insurance companies will cover 8 over-the-counter at-home tests per covered individual per month. MassHealth members are included.
- Residents should check with their insurance carrier for information about how their plan will cover over-the-counter tests and where to purchase tests through preferred pharmacies and retailers, as details may vary. Residents should also check with their insurance provider before purchasing tests through online retailers, such as Amazon, as the full cost may not be covered.

PCR tests are available at hundreds of locations across the Commonwealth, including 40 state-sponsored "Stop the Spread" testing sites free of charge to Massachusetts residents. For a full list of testing locations, visit www.mass.gov/gettested