

# RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING KITS FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN SIMCOE MUSKOKA

January 14, 2022

To provide families with an additional layer of protection for COVID-19, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit in collaboration with local school boards will be providing additional take-home rapid antigen testing kits to elementary school students.

Elementary students (Grades K-8) will be sent home with additional rapid antigen testing kits when they return to in person learning. Please note that although your child will bring these kits home, the use of **rapid antigen testing is voluntary**. Students are not required to take a rapid antigen test to attend school.

## When to use the take-home rapid antigen test(s):

Students, regardless of vaccination status, can use the rapid antigen test(s) if they have symptoms of COVID-19 (as per the [Ontario COVID-19 school and child care screening](#)). Rapid antigen tests can help find out the likelihood that their symptoms are related to COVID-19.

## How to use the rapid antigen test:

Students should test at home and with the help of a parent or caregiver, if needed. Please follow the [instructions](#) provided. A general instructional [video](#) can also be viewed online. If you have additional questions about how to use the screening kit, please read the information on our [webpage](#). At this time, due to high call volume, we are not able to answer questions about the use of the kits through our Health Connection phone line.

## What to do after completing a rapid antigen test (results available within 15 minutes):

**If the test is positive:** A positive result on a rapid antigen test is a good indication that you have COVID-19. The result does not need to be confirmed by a PCR test. If your child tests positive for COVID-19, they must stay home and isolate. The amount of time will depend on their age and whether they are fully vaccinated:

- **Fully vaccinated or aged 11 or younger:** must stay home (isolate) for 5 days from the day symptoms started. After 5 days, they can return to school when symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours.
- **Partially vaccinated, unvaccinated, or immunocompromised (aged 12 or over):** must stay home (isolate) for 10 days from the time their symptoms started.

All other household members (regardless of vaccination status) must also stay home and isolate for the same amount of time.

## If the test is negative:

- **A negative result on one rapid antigen test does not rule out COVID-19.** If your child tests negative on one rapid antigen test but has symptoms of COVID-19 or lives in the same house as someone with symptoms, they must continue to stay home and isolate as per the timeframe listed above.
- **If two rapid antigen tests (RATs) collected 24-48 hours apart are both negative,** students can return to school when their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea).

## How to dispose of rapid antigen tests:

Put COVID-19 home testing devices into your garbage. This includes small plastic components. You can recycle cardboard and paper packaging.

Rapid antigen screening is one additional tool that we can use to limit the spread of COVID-19, but it is important to remember that a negative result does not rule out COVID-19. If any symptoms develop, your child must stay home and isolate, as per the instructions above. We appreciate your ongoing commitment to the health and safety of our school communities.