

Rapid COVID Test Kit Guidance for residential behavioral health providers

Background & Distribution

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) has a limited one-time supply of over-the-counter rapid COVID antigen test kits to distribute to residential behavioral health providers. Additional supplies may become available but are not guaranteed.

Participating Facilities

BCHD will work in partnership with Behavioral Health Systems Baltimore to distribute the test kits to providers. Any licensed and/or accredited residential behavioral health provider, as well as residential facilities which have coordinated Covid-19 care with BCHD's Outbreak Investigation team, may request kits.

Who Should Be Tested

BCHD recommends utilizing the limited supply of test kits in these ways:

- Test residents or staff who work directly with residents, who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19
 - Symptoms of COVID-19 include: new onset fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, body aches, headache, loss of smell or taste, sore throat, congestion, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea.
- Test close contacts of COVID-positive individuals within residential programs
 - A close contact is defined as anyone within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or longer during a 24-hour period.
- Test individuals in quarantine after an exposure
 - Asymptomatic individuals who are up-to-date with COVID vaccination and remain in the residence after a high-risk exposure to COVID, should be tested on day 5 after exposure.

BCHD does not currently recommend using this supply of tests for screening testing, given a limited supply. Providers are encouraged to pursue additional testing resources for population screening per CDC recommendations.

Test Administration

- Residents should self-administer the tests. Staff may proctor the testing process to ensure instructions are followed correctly, but SHOULD NOT conduct the test, process the test, or interpret the test result. IF staff conduct these activities, a CLIA waiver for COVID-19 testing is required.
- Follow the written instructions included with the test. Some types of test might require more than one test over a 2-3 day period.



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- We recommend that testing take place in a well-ventilated area, or outdoors if possible. Limit the number of individuals in the testing area and maintain a distance of greater than 6 feet from the individual performing testing.
- Staff proctoring a resident's self-test should wear appropriate personal-protective equipment including a high-quality mask, eye protection (face shield or goggles), a gown and gloves. Hand hygiene should be performed and gloves changed between each individual if handling testing materials.
- Test kits should be stored in temperature controlled areas, and adhere to temperature range specified for each kit. Temperature monitoring, especially of large quantities of kits, is recommended.
- Make note of the expiration date on the test kits. Some test kits expire within several months.

COVID Positive Results

Positive test results should be reported to the health department.

- Any individual can report rapid test results to the Maryland Department of Health at <https://onestop.md.gov> or call the BCHD COVID Call Center at 443-984-8650. Individuals should also be encouraged to contact their healthcare provider.
- Facilities should report any positive rapid test results among residents or residential staff to the BCHD Outbreak Investigation team (Kyle McDermott - 443-835-9116, or your assigned outbreak investigator), who will provide further guidance.
- If a Covid-positive resident cannot be safely isolated on your property, they can be referred for isolation at the Lord Baltimore TRI Center by phone - 443-984-8915.

About Rapid Tests

- Rapid antigen tests are less sensitive than PCR tests. There is a chance for false negative results (the person has COVID-19, but the test result is negative.)
- Accuracy of the tests can depend on using the test correctly. It is important that residents follow the package insert instructions to collect the sample, process the test, and interpret the test result, to ensure the most accurate test result.
- More information on different types of tests can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/diagnostic-testing.html>.
- Information on the different types of rapid tests, including instructions for tests, videos, and material in additional languages can be found here: <https://coronavirus.baltimorecity.gov/where-get-tested-covid-19-baltimore-city/home-rapid-covid-testing>.