



Rapid Antigen Screening Program Playbook

October 2021

This document was developed using existing clinical guidelines and manufacturer's instructions for use for the specified approved medical devices. The authority for this program is granted under the Chief Public Health Officer, Clinical Practice Information Notice 171, Community Based Testing for COVID-19, dated September 29, 2021.

Table of Contents

Rapid Antigen Screening Playbook – Overview	2
Screening Eligibility and Frequency	2
Role of Management.....	4
Roles of Testing Team	4
Training/Orientation of Testing Team.....	6
Testing Setup.....	6
Testing procedure	8
Result Reporting and notification.....	11
Pay and Benefits for Positive Cases	11
Waste Disposal.....	11
Self-Swabbing Procedure.....	12
Appendix A: Site Setup.....	14
Appendix B: Reference List.....	18

Rapid Antigen Screening Playbook – Overview

The goal of Rapid Antigen testing is to identify individuals who are not experiencing symptoms (asymptomatic) of COVID-19 to prevent them from spreading the COVID-19 virus in the workplace, at home and in the community.

This **Rapid Antigen Screening Playbook** is a best practice guide to help set up an asymptomatic screening program in your organization to test employees, clients, residents etc.

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests:

- Are for screening purposes only
- Are NOT to be used for diagnosis of acute COVID-19 infection
- Utilize a nasal swab
- Are used only on people who **DO NOT** have symptoms, also referred to as being 'asymptomatic'
- Should be used with other public health measures such as symptom screening, physical distancing, masking and hand hygiene
- Do not replace requirements to protect the health and safety of workers
- Do not ensure that the individuals are free from or will not contract COVID-19, it simply means that at that time, they are not producing COVID antigens that can be detected by the test.

Screening Eligibility and Frequency

To be eligible for this program, individuals must:

- Be asymptomatic (do not have any symptoms of COVID-19).
- Have not had any contact with a known positive case of COVID-19.
- Be persons who have not had COVID-19 within the last 90 days. The screening test may pick up results from the previous infection.

Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms are not eligible for this program. If a participant has or develops symptoms as shown below they should immediately self-isolate and arrange for testing at their nearest location.



Government of
Northwest Territories

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

General COVID-19 Screening Tool



If you have shortness of breath or difficulty breathing – call 9-1-1. If you answer **YES** to ANY of the questions above, please stay home and complete [the COVID-19 Self-assessment online](#).

If you answer **NO** to ALL of the questions above, please follow any COVID-19 policies and procedures that apply when you enter a workplace or public space.



Role of Management

- Identify personnel who will support testing in your organization: site lead, screeners, volunteers, testers
- Determining how many testers you will require:
 - Each tester can do approximately 6 tests/hour
 - Confirm the number of tests requested at the site by calculating:
 - The number of people to be tested
 - The capacity of space to support testers as well as those to be tested, ensuring safe distancing practices can be met
 - The number of tests per week (minimum weekly is recommended as a standard, but testing 2-3 times a week adds increased protection for those who frequent the workplace or who are in multiple work settings in during the week)
 - Plan the number of testers and hours required to meet this demand. This can range from one person that will complete all roles (small organization) to having many people to complete the testing. It is all dependent on the demand in your organization.
- Determine the location you want to set up for testing.
- The testing schedule should be determined by the organization or by recommendation from the office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO). Updated recommendations will be communicated to you through the NTHSSA.
- For the purpose of the screening program it is recommended to screen twice a week in your organization
 - Tests may be scheduled before or after work, during scheduled breaks, as part of the workplace routine or periodically throughout the day.

Roles of Testing Team

The following roles are examples of the type of team you can build depending on the size of your organization. They are not mandatory roles. They are to help guide your set up.

Site Lead

- Responsible for ensuring that the screening area is appropriately set up before each shift along with guidance from setup checklists (See Appendix A: Site Setup)
- Provides leadership
- Ensuring all components of the program are assessed in advanced and trialed



Screeners/Volunteers

- Roles and responsibilities
 - Greet participants as they arrive
 - Note their attendance at testing
 - Reviews COVID screening questions with participants
 - Manage traffic, social distance and mask compliance

Point of Care User/Tester

- Training
 - Training is provided online by the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority. A link to the training package is found on the NTHSSA website.
 - Training takes about 40 minutes to complete and shows you how to complete the testing process from start to finish, including how to prepare your testing space, appropriate PPE, conduct the test, interpret the test results, action and report the results.
 - Links to instructional videos are included.
 - Only those who have completed the training may conduct the test. Organizations must retain copies of the completed quiz for all who are providing the test.
 - Any qualified tester in your organization may provide testing to your employee or population.
- Roles and Responsibilities
 - Identifies person tested and maintains a match between the person and the test through the testing process (avoid sample mixups)
 - Educates those receiving the test as to the steps of the test and the intent to use the test as a screening tool only
 - Collects the nasal swab samples required to complete the rapid test
 - Observes and guides individuals who chose to perform the nasal swab collection independently (self-swabbing) Explain how to collect and the action to be taken
 - Reads the test results from the rapid tests between 15 and 20 minutes for each test obtained
 - Provides education to those tested as to their results and next steps as per tester training
 - Enters the testing event data into the [COVID-19 Antigen Test Log](#). This log is used by multiple organizations and only collects the information you require.
 - Confidentiality (personal information and results) throughout the testing process must be maintained



Training/Orientation of Testing Team

- Personnel who have been assigned to provide COVID-19 antigen tests under authority of the CPHO/NTHSSA are required to complete the NTHSSA training program [training program](#). The employer or organization must keep a record of all who are certified to test.
- Qualified testers must self-monitor and screen for symptoms daily for themselves and each person tested.
- Personnel conducting the tests are required to wear a medical/procedural mask, nitrile gloves (changed between tests with hand hygiene performed), gown, and protective eyewear.
- Appropriate cleaning and waste bins are required at each test station to ensure cleaning between tests/persons.
- **Used Panbio tests and swabs can be disposed in regular garbage regardless of result.**
- A visible name tag with role should be provided.

Testing Setup

Site Selection – Needs to be a large space to allow social distancing and good flow of people (ideally unidirectional flow). Tests take roughly 10 minutes to completely administer with a 15 minute wait time for result, space should include both testing and waiting zones/areas.

Set-up – as per Appendix A

- Signage (poster with testing dates), workstations, waste management etc.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) considerations

- All participants are expected to wear a face mask covering over their nose and mouth.
- Hand hygiene stations should be available
- All personnel working in the testing space are required to wear appropriate PPE; a minimum requirement is a level 1 (basic) medical grade mask. Those supporting set up or clean up are required to wear gloves, and eye coverage as well.
- In addition to the PPE required per personnel, there should also be:
 - Sanitizer at all stations and in volunteer areas.
 - Antiviral wipes or spray and paper towels available for set-up, clean-up, and for periodic cleaning throughout the day.
 - Tissues available at all swabbing stations
 - Garbage disposal at each station as well as exits
- Steps to correctly put on PPE (donning) [Video Link](#)
- Steps to correctly take off PPE (doffing) [Video Link](#)

PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT		
1	PERFORM HAND HYGIENE	
2	PUT ON GOWN	
3	PUT ON MASK OR N95 RESPIRATOR*	
4	PUT ON EYE PROTECTION	
5	PUT ON GLOVES	
REMOVING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT		
1	REMOVE GLOVES	
2	REMOVE GOWN	
3	PERFORM HAND HYGIENE	
4	REMOVE EYE PROTECTION	
5	REMOVE MASK OR N95 RESPIRATOR	
6	PERFORM HAND HYGIENE	



Pre-screening Procedure

Pre-screening must be completed for each participant every time they present for testing.

- Participants must line up two metres apart in front of the pre-screening area.
- Participants must be wearing a mask covering their nose and mouth.
- Participants must be screened for any symptoms of COVID-19. Anyone with symptoms should not be tested, not allowed into the workplace, and be advised to seek testing through a health professional.

Testing procedure

The Abbott Panbio SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Test is intended for use by trained persons instructed on use of the product.

Testing consists of swab collection, sample preparation and use of the test device to obtain results.

Swab collection

- Perform hand hygiene and don appropriate PPE.
- **You must change gloves and perform hand hygiene between each patient to avoid the risk of contaminating other samples.**
- Record information of the person receiving the screening test, testing date and certified tester full name on the COVID-19 **Antigen Log Sheet**.
- Label extraction tube and test device with individual's name with a fine-tipped marker.
- Holding the buffer bottle vertical, fill the extraction tube to the Fill-line
- Place extraction tube in rack.
- Collect nasal swab specimens

Collecting Nasal Swab

- If the person has mucous in their nostrils have them gently blow their nose into a tissue to clear it.
- Open the nasal swab.
- Insert the swab into one nostril of the patient. The swab tip should be inserted up to 2.5cm (1 inch) from the edge of the nostril.
- Roll the swab 5 times along the mucosa inside the nostril to ensure that both mucus and cells are collected.
- Using the same swab, repeat this process for the other nostril to ensure that an adequate sample is collected from both nasal cavities.



- The swab is ready for testing.

Note: Only nasal swabs and specimens may be collected by community screening programs. Nasopharyngeal samples are not to be collected in these programs.

Sample Preparation

- Immediately insert the patient swab specimen into the extraction tube. Ensure swab tip is immersed completely into buffer.
- Extract sample by gently swirling the swab tip in the buffer fluid by pushing into the extraction tube wall at least 5 times.
- “Ring out” then squeeze out the swab by squeezing the extraction tube with your fingers.
- Break the swab at the breakpoint, remove and dispose of the broken top piece of the swab into an appropriate waste receptacle.
- Screw on the top blue cap.
- Remove bottom nozzle cap.

Testing

- Dispense 5 drops of the extracted specimen into the test device well by gently squeezing the extraction tube
- Start the timer and wait 15 minutes before reading the results. Do not report after 20 minutes.
- Document results as per result and interpretation guide (following slides).
- After results are reported, dispose of test device/extractor tube in regular garbage.
- Doff PPE and perform hand hygiene.

Interpreting Results

Result	Description	Image
Positive	The presence of the test line (T) and the control line (C) within the result window, regardless of which line appears first, indicates a positive result.	
Next Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A lab test is required for confirmatory testing 2. Read "Positive Antigen Script Response" to individual 3. Give "Positive Handout" to individual 4. Advise person to immediately isolate and arrange testing at nearest location 5. Person should indicate that they have screened positive on a Panbio test when making their appointment. 6. Document results 	

Result	Description	Image
Negative	The presence of only the control line (C) and notest line (T) within the result window indicates a negative result.	
Next Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read "Negative Antigen Script Response" to individual 2. Document results. 	

Result	Description	Image
Invalid	If the control line (C) is not visible within the result window after performing the test, the result is considered invalid.	
Next Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If another nasal swab can be collected, repeat screening test once. 2. 3. Otherwise, refer to testing centre or health centre for follow-up assessment. 	

RESULT COUNSELLING

- Negative Script Response
- Positive Script Response
- Positive Handout

Result Reporting and notification

Data collection – For each testing location, employers are asked to report the weekly number of tests used and the number of positives and negatives. NTHSSA does not require you to report patient names.

- Delete after 90 days to protect client confidentiality

Organizations are to:

- Download the COVID-19 **Antigen Test Log Sheet**
- Use the Antigen Testing Log Sheet when running your program
- Keep a confidential record for your organization. Records are to be kept for 90 days then discarded
- Report the weekly number of tests used, number of positives and negatives using the **Detect NWT Weekly Results Submission Form** (due Fridays by 3pm)
- NTHSSA does not require the organization to send the names of clients tested. Any positive test is instructed to present to the testing centre and self-isolate immediately.

Pay and Benefits for Positive Cases

- It is the organization's responsibility to manage time away from work for an employee who had a positive test.
- The agency's HR department or person should develop sick days, paid time allowances and or outside insurance options.
- It is recommended that employers include this internally developed information regarding pay to the tester(s) for those required to isolate.

[Government of Canada Website](#)

Waste Disposal

The manufacturer does not require biohazard waste disposal for the testing waste. While this means you can throw the testing waste in your standard garbage receptacle, if you have a biohazard waste disposal process, you are encouraged to use that process. All test kit components, including swabs, can be disposed in regular garbage even from an individual who tests positive.

Self-Swabbing Procedure

If an employee is uncomfortable with another employee taking their nasal swab, the trained employee can oversee the other employee take their own nasal swab. The employee is provided a kit upon entry to the screening area. The Employee self-administers a nasal swab following the procedure below. The trained employee is present to answer any questions and support if needed.

Employees must:

1. Sanitize their hands using provided hand sanitizer.
2. Lower their mask to expose their nose.
3. Open the package and gently take out the swab. Do not touch the fabric end of the swab.
4. Put the swab gently into each nostril – one at-a-time (insert about 2 cm or about 1 inch). Roll the swab 5 times slowly along the inside of the nostril. Remove the swab and repeat 5 times in the other nostril. Make sure the swab stays in the nostril 5-7 seconds.
5. Put the fabric end of the swab into the bottom of the extraction tube and place into the holder. The screening supervisor will take over the process at that point
6. Replace your mask over your nose and mouth.
7. Dispose of trash in provided waste receptacle.
8. Sanitize your hands once more using the provided hand sanitizer.

Link to Video on instructions for self swabbing:



<https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/product-details/panbio-covid-19-ag-antigen-test.html>

Appendix A: Site Setup

This is an example of supplies and layout. It is not necessarily mandatory to have all of these supplies or set up exactly as shown.



Setup Checklist – Entry or Pre-screening Area

- ☐ Tape for marking where participants can line up spaced two metres apart
- ☐ Table for pre-screening station
- ☐ Chair for each person at the station (must be spaced two meters apart)
- ☐ Laptop & laptop charger
- ☐ Extension cord(s) – three pronged preferred
- ☐ Laminate sign listing COVID-19 symptoms
- ☐ Laminated sign directing participants who have not yet registered to the screening area
- ☐ Small table for hand sanitizer
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Box of masks for individuals who do not have mask or request a new mask (away from reach of person).

Testing area setup checklist



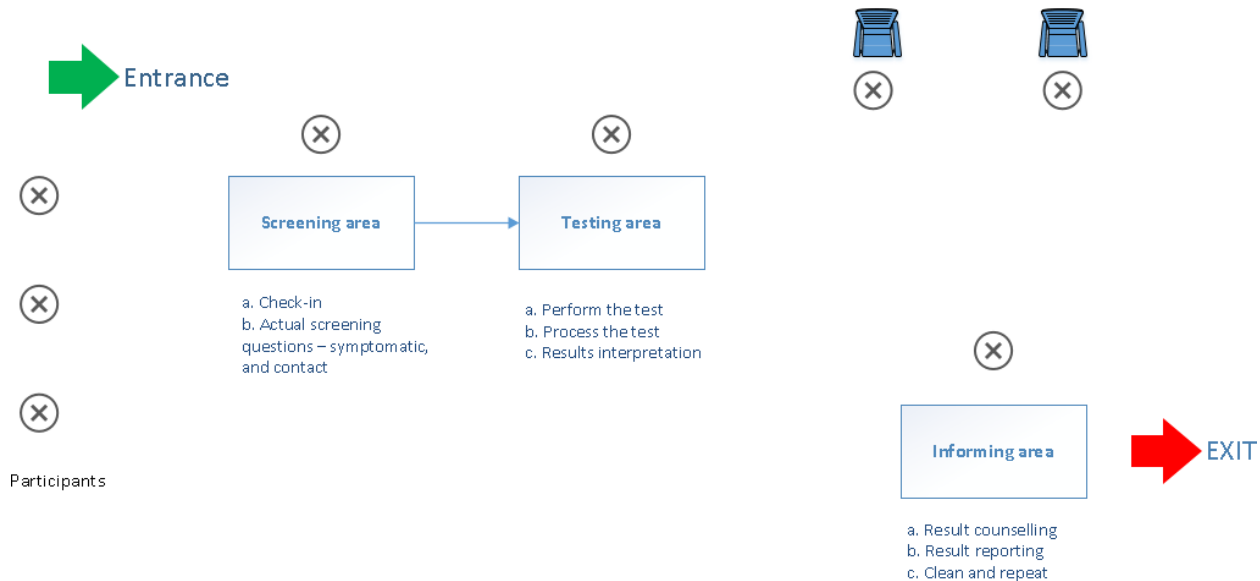
It is recommended that area be semi-private so that participants cannot easily hear or be viewed by others

- ☐ One chair for each person at the station (2 meters apart)
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Waste bin for trash from kit, tissues and masks
- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Antiviral (not bleach) wipes or spray for cleaning
- ☐ Tissue box taped to table
- ☐ Fine tip Sharpie markers (to mark test kits)
- ☐ Box of test kits – lid and side flaps removed
- ☐ Table to hold tests as they sit for 15 minutes
- ☐ Timing equipment (watch, clock, etc.) – sanitized appropriately throughout the day
- ☐ Box of sticky notes (for marking identifiers to each test).
- ☐ Box of Sharpies (for marking personal identifiers to each test).
- ☐ Box of tape (in case sticky note has trouble adhering).
- ☐ Antigen test daily log and pen
- ☐ Communications tool kit, including scripts for sharing a positive or negative result
- ☐ Informing area setup checklist

It is recommended that these are to be private because of the importance of confidentiality and compassion involved in the Counselling and Reporting part of the process

- ☐ Copies of the patient negative and positive results handout
- ☐ Computer

Example of a screening site layout



Screening Cleanup

At the end of each shift, complete the following activities:

- ☐ Ensure all contaminated waste is disposed of in either a biohazard bag/bin if available or in the general waste
- ☐ Identify any items that need to be replaced or replenished (PPE and other supplies).
- ☐ Clean and disinfect tables and chairs after every use
- ☐ If the screening site will be left without supervision, ensure that all results and computers are safely stored to ensure privacy and confidentiality.
- ☐ Clean the work area according to routine practices, between each client.

Storage and Stability

- ☐ The test kit should be stored at a temperature between 2-30 °C. Do not freeze the kit or its components.

Note: When stored in a refrigerator, all kit components must be brought to room temperature (15-30 °C) for a minimum of 30 minutes prior to performing the test. Do not open the pouch while components come to room temperature.

- ☐ The Buffer bottle may be opened and resealed for each test. The Buffer cap should be firmly sealed between each use. The Buffer is stable until expiration date if kept at 2-30°C.
- ☐ Perform the test immediately after removing the test device from the foil pouch.
- ☐ Do not use the test kit beyond its expiration date

Supplies

To re-order additional supplies please complete the [Antigen Test Request Form](#)

At times supply volumes may fluctuate, orders will be filled based on priority. The test kits are free of charge but other costs required to administer the program are the responsibility of your organization.



Appendix B: Reference List

References

Abbott. (2021). Nasal Self-Swab Procedure for Patients.
<https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/product-details/panbio-covid-19-ag-antigen-test.html>

Abbott. (2021). Nasal Self-Swab Procedure Live Action.
<https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/product-details/panbio-covid-19-ag-antigen-test.html>

Abbott. (2021). PANBIO COVID-19 Ag Rapid Test Device.
<https://www.globalpointofcare.abbott/en/product-details/panbio-covid-19-ag-antigen-test.html>

Alberta Health Services. (2021). *Rapid Testing Program*. <https://www.alberta.ca/rapid-testing-program.aspx#resources>

Saskatchewan Health Authority. (2021). *Test to Protect*.
<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/testing-information/rapid-testing>