

## Frequently Asked Questions: Rapid Antigen At-Home Tests

### **What is a Rapid Antigen At-Home test?**

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen At-Home tests are tests that were provided to residents across the Northwest Territories free of charge during the COVID-19 pandemic. These tests were in large part provided by the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) was part of the distribution network that supported access in the NWT. These tests provided residents with a way to easily test for the virus while eliminating pressure from the health and social services system during the pandemic.

The NTHSSA provided free tests to residents through health centres and points of easy access for residents such as community grocery stores. The tests were also provided at request to communities and/or organizations.

### **Why are free at-home tests no longer being distributed in the Northwest Territories?**

The need and demand for at-home testing of COVID-19 has greatly reduced with the end of the pandemic. At home testing is no longer being used to manage public health issues and vaccines are available that help reduce the risks of severe illness, hospitalization, and death from the virus. As such, there is no longer a high demand for at-home tests.

Rapid Antigen testing is not part of clinical decision-making. Any existing supply of the free rapid at-home tests stocked with the NTHSSA will expire in March 2024 and supply will not be restocked.

### **Can I still get tested for COVID-19 at a health centre?**

NWT health and social services authorities will continue to have access to in-facility COVID-19 testing. This test will continue to be performed when the need for testing has been identified by a health care provider, based on best practices and to inform clinical decision making.

Testing will not be available on-demand, but instead only when indicated and ordered by a health care professional.

### **Can I purchase a Rapid Antigen At-Home test?**

COVID-19 at-home test kits can be purchased online. In some communities, tests may also be available for purchase over the counter. Check with your local pharmacy for information on testing kits available for purchase.

### **What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?**

As with many other common viral infections (e.g., the flu), COVID-19 testing is only recommended when the result of a test will inform decisions about treatment or care. If you are generally in good health and are experiencing mild symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need to be tested.

It is recommended that as with other viral infections, you stay home until you feel better, and follow healthy habits such as washing your hands, limiting contact with others, and wearing a mask if you must go out in public.

If you're feeling unwell and would like confidential health advice from a registered nurse, you can also call 811 or 1-844-259-1793.

### **My employer requires proof that I had COVID-19 to access my COVID-19 leave. What should I do?**

The NTHSSA does not provide confirmation of COVID-19 to employers or residents for the purpose of employment absences. Check with your organization for any processes or guidelines pertaining to COVID-19 leave.