

Question and answers for small businesses on rapid antigen testing

Requirements following a positive rapid antigen test result

If a rapid antigen test result is positive:

- You must self-isolate away from your workplace
- Book a standard COVID-19 PCR test to confirm the result. Visit healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19
- Follow all public health measures

What happens if a PCR test confirms a positive rapid antigen test result?

Self-isolate and follow the advice of Public Health. They will also provide guidance on the requirements for testing and isolation for other workers along with family members and contacts of the person who has returned the positive PCR test for COVID-19.

How should staff be managed in the event of a positive RAT result?

We are currently working on guidance for businesses. This will include details on how to set up processes around staff management so that in the event of a positive RAT result not all staff necessarily need to be stood down.

Requirements following an invalid rapid antigen test result

If a rapid antigen test is invalid, you can take a second test as per manufacturer's instructions. The most likely reason for an invalid result is the sample was too small or there were not enough drops on the testing strip.

If the second rapid antigen test is invalid:

- You must self-isolate away from your workplace
- Book a standard COVID-19 PCR test to confirm the result. Visit healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19
- Follow all public health measures

If invalid results are happening often, further training may be required on how to collect an accurate sample for the rapid antigen testing.

What happens if a PCR test is positive after an invalid rapid antigen test result?

Self-isolate and follow the advice of Public Health. They will also provide guidance on the requirements for testing and isolation for other workers along with family members and contacts of the person who has returned the positive PCR test for COVID-19.

Requirements following a negative rapid antigen test result

A negative rapid antigen test result does not guarantee you are COVID-19 free. Continue to follow all public health measures and get tested if you are unwell or develop COVID-19 symptoms.

Disposal requirements

Used rapid antigen test kits are considered medical waste, so need to be disposed of safely.

Test and swab disposal will depend on the volume of testing being conducted and whether the kits used for the rapid antigen test returned a positive or negative result.

For PPE, swabs, and kits from negative rapid antigen tests:

- a **biohazard bin** is recommended for large volumes at a single site where rapid antigen testing is being undertaken frequently and on a continuing basis; or
- a **sealed zip lock bag placed in a refuse bin** is suitable for small companies or one-off testing.

If the rapid antigen test was positive, the swab and kit should be put in a zip lock bag and disposed of with normal rubbish.

PPE (Personal protection equipment) requirements

PPE requirements will vary depending on the rapid antigen test kit being used. Please follow the recommendations provided by the supplier of the kit.

As a minimum, a mask and gloves should be worn when administering a rapid antigen test. This also applies to a support person overseeing testing.

Other general questions

Can we use rapid antigen testing kits that use saliva as the sample for the test?

Currently no rapid antigen tests that use a saliva as a sample for the test have been approved for supply and use in New Zealand.

There are three rapid antigen tests authorised for import and supply under the COVID-19 Public Health Response 2020 (Point of Care) Order and approved by the Ministry of Health for use in New Zealand in specific settings.

These tests all use a front of the nose nasal swab to collect the sample for the rapid antigen test.

Do we need to record the batch number/lot number against each test conducted?

The batch/lot number does not need to be recorded against each test. However, record keeping for when a batch/lot is opened and used should be in place.

Is there a "Ministry of Health's Collection Management System (CMS)" where we need to register participating employees?

The Ministry of Health does not have a register for participating employees.