



COVID19 Self/At-Home Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is a Self/At-Home Testing Kits?

Self-tests are one of the many prevention tools we can use to stop of the spread of COVID-19, along with vaccination, hand hygiene, masking, and physical distancing. They can give you information about the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. Self-tests can be purchased online in pharmacies and retail stores and may be available through schools and other organizations at no cost.

Self-tests or at-home test kits can detect current infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. They are available over the counter at many pharmacies and online -- no prescription needed. Upcoming State and Federal programs plan to provide more availability of these test kits. When you use a self-test follow the product instructions exactly to minimize false or invalid results.

Self-tests may also be referred to as Antigen tests. They are a qualitative detection of the nucleocapsid protein antigen from SARS-CoV-2. Typically, a nasal swab is used to collect the sample.

If you have symptoms, were in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, or at a gathering with others who later tested positive, you should get tested regardless of your vaccination status.

When should self-test kits be used?

- A self-test can be used as a prevention measure before gathering indoors with others who are not in your household. This is especially important before gathering with individuals who are unvaccinated, older individuals, those who are immunocompromised, or individuals at greater risk of severe disease.
- If you are symptomatic or a close contact, self-tests may be used if you have COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed or potentially exposed to an individual with COVID-19, they are not as conclusive as the PCR test. Contact your healthcare practitioner to further discuss symptoms or if you are seeking medical care.

How do I use the self-test kit?

- Prepare to take the test by reading the manufacturer's instructions exactly to minimize false or invalid results. Wash hands with soap and water and thoroughly clean surfaces where you'll take the test. Be sure to know what the results will look like on your brand of test.
- Collect your sample by following the instructions exactly. Most self-tests take nasal samples, which require you swab the inside of your nose for fifteen seconds.
- Once collected, use the sample as described in the instructions to complete the self-test.

What to do if the self-test result is positive?

- You should **immediately isolate** and complete the **Self-Test Reporting Form** for Chenango County residents (<https://www.co.chenango.ny.us/public-health/nursing/covid19-at-home-testing.php>). The online form will ask for basic contact information.

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- If at any point you are experiencing any of the emergency warning signs of trouble breathing; persistent pain or pressure in the chest, bluish lips or face, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Isolate for 5 days, where day 0 is the day of symptom onset or (if asymptomatic) the day of collection of the first positive specimen.
- If asymptomatic at the end of 5 days or if symptoms are resolving, isolation ends, and the individual should wear a well-fitting mask while around others for an additional 5 days.
- Individuals who are moderately-severely immunocompromised should continue to follow standard (i.e., not shortened) isolation guidance. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>)
- Individuals who are unable to wear a well-fitting mask for 5 days after a 5-day isolation should follow the standard isolation guidance (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>).
- A follow-up PCR test is not necessary. Once you receive a positive test result, regardless of the type of test, you are considered a positive case and should isolate from others.
- Once isolation has been completed visit this site for a release attestation to return to work or school. <https://www.co.chenango.ny.us/public-health/nursing/covid19-at-home-testing.php>
- Notify anyone identified as a close contact and direct them to this site <https://www.co.chenango.ny.us/public-health/nursing/covid19-at-home-testing.php> for instructions regarding quarantine. A close contact reporting tool can be found here: (https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/05/13114_covid19_contacttracing_051420_0.pdf)

Who is considered a close contact?

- Anyone in your household (who you live with) is at increased risk of infection, especially with the more transmissible Omicron variant. Everyone in the household should monitor themselves closely for symptoms, especially if they are unvaccinated, immuno-compromised, or have other underlying health conditions. They may contact their healthcare practitioner about any concerns and additional treatment.
- A close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during the infectious period.
 - The infectious period goes from 2 days before you first had symptoms (if you have symptoms).
 - If you do not have symptoms (are asymptomatic), the infectious period starts 2 days prior to a positive test specimen collection.
- Close contacts should monitor themselves closely for symptoms and seek testing if symptoms develop.

How do I quarantine if I am a close contact?

- Individuals who are not fully vaccinated or fully vaccinated and eligible for a booster but not yet boosted and have been exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19 are required to quarantine for 5 days after exposure and wear a well-fitting mask while around others for an additional 5 days.
- Asymptomatic individuals who have been fully vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19 do not need to quarantine but should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days after exposure to COVID-19.
- Asymptomatic individuals who are fully vaccinated and not yet eligible for a booster are also not required to quarantine. They should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days after exposure to COVID-19 (fully vaccinated and boosted is defined as being 2 weeks or more after either receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or 2 weeks or more after receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine and having received a booster shot at least 2 weeks before the first date of exposure).

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- If symptoms appear within 10 days of exposure to a known case, if in quarantine or not, individuals should seek testing and isolate until testing is complete. If negative, return to previous quarantine status. If positive, see guidance on isolation. If testing is not possible, isolate for 5 days after symptom onset and wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days after exposure to COVID-19.
- Regardless of vaccination status, all individuals with exposure to a confirmed case should, if possible, be tested for COVID-19 on the 5th day after exposure.
- If at any point you are experiencing any of the emergency warning signs of trouble breathing; persistent pain or pressure in the chest, bluish lips or face, call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Once isolation has been completed visit this site for a release attestation to return to work or school: <https://www.co.chenango.ny.us/public-health/nursing/covid19-at-home-testing.php>

How do I obtain documentation for third parties including work or school?

- **Complete and submit the Self-Test Reporting form to report your positive self-test result** to the Chenango County Health Department: <https://www.co.chenango.ny.us/public-health/nursing/covid19-at-home-testing.php>
- Once the form is submitted, you will receive an automated email message with additional guidance and a note documenting that you have submitted a positive self-test result to the Chenango County Health Department. How to determine the end date of your isolation can be found in a previous section of this document. You will not receive further follow-up from Chenango County Health Department. If you develop symptoms or symptoms worsen, contact your healthcare provider, and seek additional care.

I am very stressed about my job, my health, and my family. Who can I talk to?

On March 26, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced that more than 8,000 mental health professionals signed up to provide free online mental health services. The helpline is staffed by trained volunteers, including mental health professionals, who have received training in crisis counseling related to mental health consequences of infectious disease outbreaks, typical stress reactions, anxiety management, coping skills, and telephonic counseling. The helpline will be accessible to New Yorkers who are deaf or hard of hearing, and to non-English speaking callers, through the Language Line. New Yorkers can call the state's hotline at 1-844-863-9314

I have been placed on quarantine. Who can help me with paid sick leave?

For information on paid sick leave for persons quarantined as a result of novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, please visit: <https://paidfamilyleave.ny.gov/covid19> . This website has information regarding:

- Guaranteed workers' job protection and financial compensation in the event the individual, or their minor dependent child, are subject to an order of mandatory or precautionary quarantine or isolation, issued by the state of New York, NYSDOH, local board of health, or any government entity duly authorized to issue such order due to COVID-19.
- Financial compensation using a combination of benefits. These benefits are not available to employees who are able to work through remote access or other means.
- Paid Family Leave can also be used to care for a family member with a serious health condition

Where can I learn more about self-tests?

- CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/self-testing.html>
- New York State Department of Health website <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-testing>