

New Mandated Requirements for Rapid Antigen Testing

Update to Long-Term Care Homes as of February 9, 2021

As of February 8, 2021, all York Region long-term care homes are required to start transitioning to point-of-care Abbott Panbio™ COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Testing for all staff, student placements, volunteers, caregivers, support workers and general visitors.

As of February 16, 2021, testing in all York Region long-term care homes must be fully operational.

During the transition to full operation, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing frequency as outlined in the [Minister's Directive, dated January 8, 2021](#) will remain unchanged. Once Rapid Antigen Testing programs are fully operational, PCR testing will continue to be used only in instances where individuals are symptomatic or have a positive antigen test result, individuals have been in contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, a home is in outbreak, or as otherwise directed by York Region Public Health.

Frequency of Rapid Antigen Testing is as follows:

- Staff, student placements and volunteers who enter LTC homes **two or more days in a seven-day** period undergo Antigen Tests on non-consecutive days up to three times prior to entry into the LTC home
- Staff, student placements and volunteers who enter LTC homes **only once in a seven-day period** undergo an Antigen Test on the “day of” prior to entry into the LTC home
- Caregivers, support workers and general visitors undergo an Antigen Test on the “**day of**” regardless of how many times they attend to a home in a seven-day period

A negative Antigen Test result is required according to the above frequencies before individuals are permitted to enter the home and have contact with a resident or another “cleared” person.

The [Ministry of Long-Term Care Memo, dated January 27, 2021](#) also provides additional information on:

- **Implementation supports:** three different modes of specimen collection, changes to regulations to that allows more health professionals to perform the Antigen Test, flexibility in determining delivery approaches, and training webinars
- **Data collection:** updates to Ministry's Health Data Collection Service website to include Rapid Antigen Test reporting
- **Ordering Antigen Test kits:** how to order directly from Ontario Health
- **Testing adherence program:** requirements to put third party oversight in place

To support long-care home administrators, Public Health Ontario has also issued an [Abbott Panbio™ COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test: Biosafety Considerations Fact Sheet](#) that outlines what you need to know and key considerations for test users which include:

- Conduct a local risk assessment **before** testing with the Panbio™ COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling patient specimens and used devices
- Dispose of specimens, kits, and other contaminated materials carefully in an appropriate biohazard container



- Maintain a safe work area

IPAC Canada has also provided a [Rapid Antigen Testing Questions and Answers](#) to guide COVID-19 testing requirements.

Contact York Region Public Health

For more information, call our dedicated health professional COVID-19 line at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280** (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, after hours call 905-953-6478).

Continue to visit york.ca/healthprofessionals, york.ca/covid19 and Ontario.ca/covid19 for up to date information on COVID-19.