



memorandum

To: NS Health Zone Leadership

cc: Angela Keenan; Senior Director Emerging & Reemerging Infections Network (ERIN)
Dr. Shelly McNeil; Senior Medical Director, ERIN & Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases
Jill Smith, Director of Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness
IWK

From: Holly Gillis, Public Health Director, Public Health Mobile Unit

Date: October 10, 2024

Message: COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test Kits Update

**** updated rapid test supply information ****

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test Kits for NSHA & IWK Health Healthcare Workers and NSHA clinics

COVID-19 rapid antigen tests remain available for clients accessing NS health clinics and for providing NSHA/IWK healthcare workers access to rapid antigen testing for at-home symptomatic testing.

New supply is available. All COVID-19 rapid tests being ordered within NS Health should be ordered through SAP. Supply Chain may limit quantities and substitute between products. Please note that the test kits currently being distributed are:

- **Swift Swab (boxes of 2 tests) SAP #266932 (this brand may be substituted for other rapid test brands/products)**

You may notice a variance in the swab lengths between COVID-19 rapid antigen tests. For a long swab, a throat and nares swab is preferred to enhance the effectiveness of the specimen collection. If the kit contains a shorter swab (4 inches), nares swab only should be used. Instructions will reflect the best way to collect a specimen for the best results.

A cost centre is required to order these tests. However, all associated costs will be moved out of the ordering cost centre quarterly by finance.

Additional information, including instructions can be found [here](#). Healthcare workers should not access rapid tests through community partners; we encourage access through your department utilizing SAP ordering.

Nova Scotia Health continues to use rapid tests as part of [Report and Support](#), to quickly identify people within 5-7 days of symptoms starting who may benefit from COVID-19 medications to reduce the risk of severe disease and hospitalization. Acute respiratory virus testing criteria has been updated and is available [COVID-19 and Flu Testing | Nova Scotia Health \(nshealth.ca\)](#)

Nova Scotia Health is updating its direction on COVID-19 testing to ensure people at the highest risk for severe illness or hospitalization have access to COVID-19 medications. The recommendation and eligibility for both PCR and rapid testing will be focused on those at highest risk. To optimize rapid test inventory, we will be encouraging the general public:

- Do not repeat the rapid test if it is positive.
- Do not continue to test until the test is negative.

If you have any questions on rapid test supply, please reach out to communityCOVIDtesting@nshealth.ca. Additional information on Nova Scotia Health's approach to respiratory season, can be found on the Emerging & Reemerging Infections Network Hub located [here](#). Updates on COVID-19 rapid test supply and new SAP numbers will be shared through the Nova Scotia Health news.