



# HAMILTON RAPID TESTING

## **ABBOTT RAPID PANBIO ANTIGEN SCREENING**

These screening kits are provided by the Ontario Government complimentary to Small and Medium-sized businesses as an additional tool to help keep workplaces in Ontario safe. Any misuse of the procedures can negatively impact the workplace. Care and attention to the proper process is essential for this tool to be effective. The latest information from Health Canada suggests that up to 1/3 of people carrying the virus are asymptomatic causing little or no noticeable signs, however, over 50% of known cases were transmitted by an asymptomatic carrier. This makes it incredibly important to find asymptomatic carriers in order to combat the spread and get to more normalized community life.

A COVID-19 rapid screening test can be performed anywhere (e.g. on-site, at the place of employment) and does not require shipping a specimen to a lab for processing. It takes approximately 15 minutes to yield a result. Frequent screening with rapid antigen tests increases the chances of early identification of cases in asymptomatic individuals ONLY. Recommended frequency is twice per employee, per week.

## **TOP Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who can businesses give screening kits to and who can we screen?**

At this time you CANNOT give kits to anyone. They are ONLY for use with your employees that are frequently coming to the workplace. You also cannot screen anyone else other than employees coming to the workplace, this is essential as reporting presumptive positives or inconclusive results may call into question your ability/authority to do so. Employees have the right to refuse, but when they comply that is consent to collect and report the data.

### **What is the accuracy of these screens?**

These are highly accurate in the range of 90% accurate; however, there are circumstances where they may show a false positive or false negative. In particular, this is why NO ONE SHOWING SYMPTOMS should be screened using these tests, as a false negative result might put the organization in a compromising position.

### **How do we dispose of the waste?**

The screen pad and vial (with the swab and buffering agent in) are considered hazardous waste and must be sent to a processing facility. Please review [this Government web page](#) to understand the responsibilities for companies participating in the program.

### **How is the screening administered?**

Rapid Antigen Screening is a NASAL SWAB and not evasive. The requirement is the swab must be inserted into each nostril for 5 to 7 seconds 2 cm (1 inch), ensuring the inside of the nostril is wiped by the swab for that time.

### **What is the reporting responsibility our business has with respect to the results of the screens?**

In order to participate, you have signed a document that makes you responsible to report all results of your screens. The total number of screens, all positive, all negative and all inconclusive results must be entered in the reporting form available online at [hamiltonrapidtests.ca](https://hamiltonrapidtests.ca)

### **Do we have to test fully vaccinated staff?**

The Ministry of Health says it is not recommended to perform antigen screening testing on vaccinated employees as the likelihood of COVID-19 is low for this group which reduces the utility of screening and could result in an increase of false positive results. However, this is *guidance* - participating businesses may still test staff that are fully vaccinated at their discretion.



## Full Frequently Asked Questions

### How many staff can go to pick up and train for the screening kits?

Due to safety protocols and our training area, we are limiting in-person visits to the facility. Send **ONLY** one person.

### Can I just drop in and pick up kits for refills of my order?

No. A scheduled pick up appointment is mandatory. It is important to keep the numbers of people down to reduce the opportunity of close contact. Please wait until you receive an email confirmation to visit the rapid testing centre.

### What is the next step if an employee has a positive or inconclusive result?

Anyone screening presumptive positive or inconclusive **MUST** immediately self-isolate and contact Hamilton Public Health for a PCR Test within 24 hours and cannot be permitted in the workplace until there is a confirmed (by Public Health) negative test result. It is **REQUIRED** that Public Health be notified of any positive results immediately.

According to the Ministry of Health as of now, you are required to report all presumptive positives, and inconclusive results to Hamilton Public Health.

Your employee is required to follow all of the Hamilton Public Health authority's direction and **MUST** arrange for a PCR test within 24 hours of their presumptive positive or inconclusive result.

We will be reporting from our Rapid Screening Kit website to the Ministry of Health and Health Canada for data collection.

### Who can perform the screen on the employees?

The Ontario Government authorizes self screening for these kits. However, the Ministry of Health requires that a trained individual supervises the process. The "trained individual" is the Screening Supervisor Designate at your site/workplace who has watched the mandatory 5-minute video.

No one other than the employee should perform the swabbing procedure on any employee. The supervisor is there to instruct and ensure the procedure is followed for an accurate result.

### What is the frequency we should be screening our employees?

The recommendation from public health is that all employees should be screened twice per week.

It is understood in some settings or with a higher frequency of close contact that some businesses will want to screen more than twice per week. Please advise us at [rapidtesting@hamiltonchamber.ca](mailto:rapidtesting@hamiltonchamber.ca). We would like to help but this will affect our required supply needs at the Chamber, and we need a bit of notice to alert our supplier.

Conversely, some may want to test less frequently or may have a variety of schedules that employees are in the workplace. It is really up to you, but please, put the safety of your employees first, and that will ensure you have a safe workplace.

### Do these kits have an expiry date?

Yes, they do. Our supply has expiry dates in 2022. We will advise if we are getting close to the expiry dates.

Using the kits after they expire cannot be assumed to have the accuracy they do prior to expiry. Caution should be taken to review the box and ensure they are not expired.

### Do I only give screens for employees showing symptoms?

No. In fact, it should be recognized that anyone showing symptoms must be kept **OUT** of the workplace and must not be allowed to return until Local Public Health provides a confirmed Negative result from a diagnostic PCR Test.



**It is allergy season and people are experiencing symptoms similar to COVID-19, should we avoid screening people that may be experiencing allergy symptoms, or should we screen them regardless?**

Anyone showing symptoms that are similar to COVID-19 could in fact be infectious and should not be screened. They should be diverted directly to public health for a PCR assessment.

While we recognize some symptoms can resemble allergies, the risk to the workplace may not be worth ignoring.

**I am a consultant on workplace safety, can I order on behalf of my clients and screen their employees?**

No. These kits are provided free of charge to small and medium-sized businesses for their sole purpose. A designated employee must be assigned the responsibility of taking the supervisor training, ensuring proper screening processes are adhered to and reporting on behalf of the employer the results of the screens. There are avenues available for third-party vendors to purchase their own kits and outside of this program to provide screening services, this program is intended to remain complimentary and direct to employer only.

**Can I purchase extra kits so I can screen those I want to, if so, how much do they cost?**

No. These are not for sale, we are not authorized to charge anyone for these kits. Conversely, the document you signed also requires that you not sell or distribute these as well.

The box of 25 kits is approximately \$200 based on retail information we know of. They are expensive, and this is all funded by the Federal and Provincial Governments of Canada.

**Do I have to be a member of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce to order the kits?**

No, this program is open to all small and medium-sized employers (150 employees or less) within the City of Hamilton. Employers with over 150 employees can order through the [Ontario government's portal](#).

**I am a volunteer/employee for an organization we have a number of volunteers that would like to meet regularly in person. Can these kits be used for that purpose?**

No. These kits are not to be used to validate or substantiate not following public health guidelines. They are not intended to be used to verify negative carriers so guidance rules by the Province or local public health can be waived. Any person who screens presumptive negative MUST continue to follow public health guidelines of distancing, washing their hands, wearing a mask properly and adhering to public health gathering orders.

**Some of our Employees are required to travel for business, can this screen validate them for travel?**

No. While this screen has extremely good reliability, this is not a tool for travel or usurping any Federal, Provincial or International guidelines.

**I noticed there are two packages marked Control Swabs, what do we use them for?**

Contained in each kit are two Control Swabs. One will produce a negative result, the other will produce a positive result.

These are ONLY to be used for quality control purposes. If you are finding that the results are not showing up on the testing pads, you can follow the process in the manual provided to do a quality control check of the pads by simply following the same testing regime EXCEPT DO NOT SWAB ANYONE WITH THESE CONTROL SWABS, they have ingredients on them already to produce the results.

While the Positive Control Swab will show positive for COVID-19, there is nothing on the swab that is infectious or that will pass COVID-19 to a person. It is a pre-loaded swab and should not be used for anything other than quality control.