

PROVINCIAL ANTIGEN SCREENING PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DO I HAVE TO BE A CHAMBER MEMBER TO QUALIFY?

No. Chambers of Commerce throughout Ontario are working with the government to provide all small and medium size businesses (150 employees or fewer) with easy access to Rapid Antigen Screening Kits. Not all Chambers of Commerce are able to physically accommodate the distribution process, and those that are able will have systems set up specific to their circumstances and local demand. The Northumberland Central, Trent Hills and Brighton-Cramahe Chambers of Commerce have partnered to share the workload and ensure access to Rapid Antigen Screening Kits with distribution outlets currently operating in Cobourg and Campbellford.

WHY DO THIS?

To reduce or prevent the spread of COVID-19 through infected individuals with no outward symptoms.

The latest information from Health Canada suggests that up to one third of all people carrying the virus are asymptomatic – having little or no noticeable signs. However, over 50% of known cases were transmitted by an asymptomatic carrier. This makes it incredibly important to identify asymptomatic carriers in order to combat the spread and get to more normalized community life.

A COVID-19 rapid screening test can be performed 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.

Regular screening with rapid antigen tests increases the chances of early identification of cases in asymptomatic individuals before they unknowingly spread the virus.

Recommended frequency is twice per week, per employee. Ontario has also released guidance for organizations that choose to participate in COVID-19 testing that falls outside of the public health care system, to ensure there is appropriate oversight and consumer protection and that public resources are supporting public health initiatives.

WHO CAN BUSINESSES GIVE SCREENING KITS TO AND WHO CAN WE SCREEN?

You cannot give kits to anyone. They are only and expressly provided for use with your employees who are regularly coming to the workplace. You cannot screen anyone other than employees coming to the workplace. Employees have the right to refuse screening without recourse, but when they comply that is considered consent to collect and report the data.

WHAT IS THE ACCURACY OF THESE SCREENS?

These kits are reported accurate in the range of 90%. There are some rare circumstances where they may show a false positive or false negative. This is why no one showing symptoms or having recent been in direct contact with an infected individual should be screened using these tests - a false negative result might put the organization in a compromised position.

HOW DO WE DISPOSE OF THE WASTE?

It's an evolving process. Packaging can be disposed of through regular recycle and waste streams. The used screen pad and vial (with the swab and buffering agent in) are considered hazardous waste. Please ensure the used vial is tightly sealed, and put it and the screen pad in a sealed zip-lock style bag. The Chamber will provide those that have signed up with specific directions on how to dispose of the hazardous waste safely.

HOW IS THE SCREENING ADMINISTERED - THROUGH THE NOSTRIL OR MOUTH?

Rapid Antigen Screening is a less invasive Nasal swab. The requirement is the swab must be inserted into each nostril for 5 to 7 seconds 2 cm (1 inch) inside the nose, while ensuring the inside of the nostril is thoroughly wiped by the swab.

WHAT IS THE BUSINESS' REPORTING RESPONSIBILITY WITH RESPECT TO THE RESULTS OF THE SCREENS?

You must report weekly. In order to participate in this initiative, you have signed a document that makes you responsible to report all results of your screens. We've made it easy for you to report the total number of screens and results with our online reporting form.

HOW MANY STAFF CAN GO TO PICK UP AND TRAIN FOR THE SCREENING KITS?

One. Our pandemic protocols stipulate that all visitors entering the Trent Hills Chamber of Commerce must self-screen answering no to all of the protocol questions prior to entering, wear a face mask, use the hand sanitizer provided and stay on designated spaced on the floor. Your Designated Screening Supervisor/Contact will view the training video at our reception desk, and your first order of supplies will be on the counter for pick-up. After the initial training appointment has been completed, restocking orders will be zero-contact "Curbside Pick Up" by appointment.

CAN I JUST DROP IN AND PICK UP KITS FOR REFILLS OF MY ORDER?

No. All initial training and successive restocking visits are strictly by appointment to ensure we continue to meet pandemic protocols. All appointments will be on Tuesdays or Thursdays. Once you place your order and have indicated your preferred day, your Designated Screening Supervisor will be contacted by the Trent Hills Chamber of Commerce to confirm a mutually convenient time.

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS A POSITIVE OR INCONCLUSIVE RESULT?

Anyone with a Presumptive Positive or Inconclusive screen result MUST immediately self-isolate and contact Local Public Health for a PCR Test within 24 hours. The individual 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. You are also required to include the result in your weekly results report to the Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce.

WHO CAN PERFORM THE SCREEN ON THE EMPLOYEES?

The Ontario Government authorizes “self” screening using these kits, with trained supervision. Your Designated Screening Supervisor must supervise the screening process to ensure accuracy, but no one other than the employee should perform the actual swab procedure on any employee. The Designated Screening Supervisor is there to instruct and ensure the procedure is followed for an accurate result.

CAN I TEACH OTHERS HOW TO DO THE SCREENING, HAVE THEM WATCH THE VIDEO AND THEN HAVE THEM SUPERVISE THE SCREENS?

No. At this point the Ministry of Health requires that training of the Designated Screening Supervisor be confirmed by the Chamber of Commerce. We recognize that there are some cases (shift work, vacations, etc.) that a second Designated Screening Supervisor may be required, but that individual will need to go through the regulated training process at the Chamber office.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE BE SCREENING OUR EMPLOYEES?

Twice per week. The recommendation from public health is that all employees should be screened two times each 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 the Trent Hills Chamber of Commerce if you would like to screen more than this so we can order supplies accordingly. 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. At this point, the kits being supplied appear to all have an expiry date 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 SCREEN EMPLOYEES SHOWING SYMPTOMS?

No. in fact, quite the opposite. 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. These screening tests are to identify asymptomatic individuals – those who exhibit no symptoms but can be contagious.

CAN A WORKPLACE SAFETY CONSULTANT ORDER AND TEST ON BEHALF OF THEIR CLIENTS?

No. These kits are provided free of charge to small and medium sized businesses for their express use. A Designated Screening Supervisor must be assigned the responsibility of taking the 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, but this program is intended to remain complimentary and direct to employers only.

CAN I PURCHASE EXTRA KITS SO I CAN SCREEN NON-EMPLOYEES, FRIENDS OR FAMILY?

No. These are not for sale. These kits are provided free of charge by the government for the express purpose of helping to safeguard small and medium sized businesses. Your agreement expressly stipulates that you cannot sell or distribute the kits outside of the employees of the registered business.

CAN THESE KITS BE USED TO TEST VOLUNTEERS THAT WOULD LIKE TO MEET REGULARLY?

No. These kits are not to be used to validate or substantiate an avoidance in 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.

CAN THIS SCREEN BE USED TO VALIDATE BUSINESS TRAVELLERS?

No. While this screen is ideally suited for its intended purpose, it is not a recognized travel test and must not be used to attempt to circumvent any Federal, Provincial or International guidelines.

I NOTICED THERE ARE TWO PACKAGES MARKED “CONTROL SWABS”. WHAT DO WE USE THEM FOR?

Nothing - unless questionable screening results merit a quality control test. Contained in each kit are two Control Swabs: one will produce a Negative result and 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 the control swabs! They are already pre-loaded to produce pre-determined results. Please note that, 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.