

Midwest Coordination Center Pool Testing Information

2021-22 SCHOOL COVID-19 TESTING PROGRAM

10/8/2021

Description of the test

The Midwest Coordination Center provides a variety of testing options at no cost to schools. The federal government has funded the program that will allow schools to conduct pooled screening testing and symptomatic testing. Screening testing is intended to identify COVID-19 cases in people who are asymptomatic or before people develop symptoms.

The pooled testing can be done with an administered or self-collected nasal swab or saliva sample. At the lab, specimens are pooled into groups of five to 10 for test processing. If there is a positive result within the pool, the lab reruns the test at the individual level. Pools can be assigned at the classroom level and at the staff level.

Considerations for use

- The Midwest Coordination Center encourages weekly surveillance testing, even if the prevalence of COVID-19 is expected to be low in a school.
- Pool testing may be used for people who are both symptomatic and asymptomatic.
- Adults who are administering the test to people should understand and implement Standard Precautions for infection prevention, including the proper use of personal protection equipment (PPE) as needed for the situation.
 - [CDC: Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/non-us-settings/overview/#standard-based-precautions\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/non-us-settings/overview/#standard-based-precautions)
 - [OSHA: COVID-19 Healthcare Emergency Temporary Standard \(ETS\) \(www.osha.gov/coronavirus/ets\)](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/ets)
- When there is a positive test result, families should notify the school and schools should follow MDH and CDC quarantine guidance: [Best Practice Recommendations for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/schoolrecs.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/schoolrecs.pdf).
- Nasal swab testing is available for people 5 years and older, and saliva testing is available for people 3 years and older.

Logistics and roles

- Ordering requires a lead time of at least four weeks.
- Onsite screening testing events must be conducted on an assigned day to ensure lab capacity.
- The nasal swab and saliva sample collections may be self-collected by the individual under the supervision of a school nurse or other trained staff member. School staff members also have the option to assist with the sample collection.
- It is anticipated that testing each person will take approximately five minutes. This includes time for changing PPE, swabbing the person, and packaging the specimens. This is an estimate only and schools will have their own discretion to optimize the process to meet their needs.
- The Midwest Coordination Center requires for testing coordinators to complete a training course (it is a live webinar format). The training course is optional for other staff members. The testing coordinator may work with participants in the classroom, assist with online registration, and troubleshoot technology issues.
- Check-out staff are helpful to verify the participants have completed the testing process and counts packages and samples regularly.
- After conducting testing, schools must complete the testing collection report to provide information about the kits used, the kits remaining, if more kits are needed for the next round of testing, and feedback on the testing experience.
- Information on test accuracy and any risks or side effects is available in the manufacturer's instructions which can be obtained upon registering for their program.

Results

- Results are typically available from Battelle within 48 hours of being received at the testing laboratory sites.
- Results are reported directly to both the tested individual and the schools designated site test reader via the Midwest Coordination Center's portal website.
- Results are reported directly to both the person tested and the school's designated site test reader via the Midwest Coordination Center's portal website.
- Lab results are reported to MDH by the Midwest Coordination Center as required by law.

Legal and consent

- **The State of Minnesota makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, regarding these tests, including the use, condition, and effectiveness of tests, or the accuracy of test results. The persons ordering and taking a test accept the test "as-is" and assume all risks associated with the test. The State of Minnesota assumes no responsibility for actual, consequential, incidental, special or exemplary damages resulting from, caused by, or associated with any test.**
- The person taking a test will provide consent directly to the Midwest Coordination Center, and the person should work with a parent or guardian as necessary to ensure they understand and fully complete any informed consent requirements.
- Schools may want to consider whether and how to verify that the person being tested has delivered consent to the Midwest Coordination Center and Battelle.

- **Schools are strongly encouraged to consult with legal counsel. The State of Minnesota cannot provide legal advice to schools or districts and this document should not be relied on as legal advice.**
- Schools may be subject to federal and state laws that govern student data and health records, which may include the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Different schools may have different federal and state obligations, including those that apply to student and health data.
- Minnesota Statutes, Section 13.04, Subdivision 2 requires those subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act to provide a “Tennessee Warning” containing specific information before collecting private or confidential data concerning individuals.

Cost

These tests are provided for free through the federal government. All supplies, shipping, and testing are free.

How to Order Tests

To order tests, schools need to register with the Midwest Coordination Center. More information can be found on [Midwest Coordination Center \(www.testedandprotected.org\)](http://www.testedandprotected.org). Information available includes:

- How to register for COVID-19 testing: Click **Request to Register** or **Login** (if already registered).
- Information for school districts, parents, and guardians.
- Information on the types of testing supported, the accuracy of those tests, explanations of pooled vs. individual testing, information on collecting test samples and returning test samples to the lab, and test results.
- Program overview includes roles and responsibilities between the Coordination Center, sample sites (schools), and the testing lab.
- Frequently asked questions.

For more information

1-833-754-2176

info@testedandprotected.org

[Midwest Coordination Center \(www.testedandprotected.org\)](http://www.testedandprotected.org)



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Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.