

COVID-19 Saliva Testing for Public and Private Teachers and School Staff: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the new saliva test?

The saliva test is a test for COVID-19 that can be done at home using video supervision from a health professional. This kind of test is comfortable and easy, as people can collect their own samples by spitting into a tube and mailing it to a lab for processing. The test was developed by the company Vault Health, working with RUCDR Infinite Biologics.

Who can get a test?

Educators, administrators, staff, and school support professionals are eligible for one free at-home saliva test from this program. This program is limited to staff at public and private schools and generally does not include home schools, nannies, or preschool staff, unless the preschool is offered in a school district setting. Students will not receive tests as part of this program.

How do I get a saliva test?

Toward the end of August, school districts will communicate directly with employees about getting a free at-home saliva test. You can order a test kit if you are sick, or if you want to have it on hand in case you need it in the future.

To order your free test kit:

- You will visit a state website and enter your information to confirm that you are employed at a public or private school. The test is free to you, but you will need to provide your insurance information or indicate if you do not have insurance.
- Once confirmed, you will get an email with instructions and a unique code. Follow the instructions to enter your code and order a test.
- You will receive the test in the mail via overnight shipping. It will include instructions for taking the test, and a prepaid package to mail it back for processing.

When and how do I take the test?

You do not have to use this test to return to school. Take the test right away if you feel symptoms of COVID-19. If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, take the test 5-7 days later.

Once you feel sick or know you were exposed to some and want to take your test, you can take the test.

- You will receive information about how to log onto the Vault Health website.
- Follow instructions to enter the Zoom video chat to connect with a health care provider. The provider will walk you through completing the test and answer any questions.
- When the test is complete, put it in the prepaid UPS package and drop it in the nearest UPS drop box for next-day delivery to the lab.
- You will get your results by email approximately 48 hours after your sample reaches the lab.

How accurate is the saliva test?

The saliva test is just as accurate as other tests like nasal swabs, according to the test manufacturer. It tests to see whether you currently have the virus that causes COVID-19. It is not an antibody (or serology) test, which can be used to tell if you may have had the virus in the past. The FDA approved this saliva test on April 10, 2020, and the Minnesota Department of Health supports its use.

Is there a deadline to order or use a test?

Currently the codes to order a test expire on December 30, 2020. The state will adjust the expiration if needed and if funding is available. Once you have received your test kit, it should be good for the whole school year, and you can keep it at room temperature in your home until its labeled expiration date.

Who pays for my test (insurance, the state, the school district)?

If you are an eligible educator or staff, you will get one COVID-19 saliva test at no cost to you. If you have insurance, you will be asked to provide your insurance information when you order your test. If you do not have insurance, you will indicate that. The state will cover all costs not paid by insurance.

Does the test include a bill for a provider visit?

One test and the required video visit are available to each teacher and staff person at no cost. There are two costs that will be paid either by your insurance or by the state: the provider visit and the test itself. The provider visit is the video call where you get instructions and do the “supervised spit.” You will need to provide a form of identification and, if you have insurance, your insurance information during this visit. Your insurance company will be billed for both the visit and the test. If you do not have insurance, your visit and test will be covered by federal

Health Resources and Services Administration funding. The state will cover any remaining costs so you will not be responsible for payment.

Will Minnesota Medical Assistance (MA) cover more than one free test kit?

The state is paying for only one test per teacher or staff person through this program. If you have your health coverage through MA and need additional tests, call the number on the back of your benefit card to see what tests may be available and whether MA will cover the Vault saliva test. This means you need to ask MA whether they will pay you back for the test if you pay for it up front.

When I take my test, can I order more kits for people in my household and have it billed to my insurance?

You can order additional saliva tests with a credit card at the retail price, but Vault Health does not currently accept insurance from the public. Call your health insurance company before ordering the test to see whether they will pay you back for the test if you pay for it up front.

Will I be excluded from going to school while being tested?

Yes, do not go to work or school while waiting for your test results.

Do I need to share my test result with my school district?

Refer to your school district policies. They may require your test result for medical leave or other occupational health purposes.

What if I need another test?

This program provides one test per person. You may choose to be tested at your local clinic or at a community testing event at any time. The saliva test is also available to the general public through this same lab though payment would not be covered by the state.



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