



# Rapid Antigen Tests

## Frequently asked questions

### What is a rapid antigen test?

A rapid antigen test (RAT) is a 'point of care' (or near person care) test that does not need to go to a laboratory for analysis.

### Why are RATs an important part of the public health response to COVID-19?

Rapid antigen tests provide results within 10 to 20 minutes and you can do them at home. They are most accurate when used to test for COVID-19 in a person who has symptoms

RATs are convenient, providing results quickly, and can be used alongside other important public health measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 where there is widespread community transmission.

### What are some situations in which I may use a RAT?

- If you develop COVID-19 symptoms, you should get tested either by PCR testing at a COVID clinic or with a RAT test.
- If you are a close contact, you may be required to undertake RATs during your 7-day [close contact](#) period.

Testing by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) remains the preferred test for someone with symptoms of COVID-19, where there is capacity at COVID testing clinics.

If wait times at COVID testing clinics reach a peak, RAT tests may be provided depending on your circumstances.

### Using RATs to reduce the risk of transmission

To reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19, you may consider testing yourself with a RAT even if you remain well if:

- attending a gathering with lots of people in a crowded indoor or outdoor place, e.g. a wedding, funeral or nightclub
- visiting someone who is especially vulnerable to the risks of COVID-19, e.g. an elderly person or someone who is immunocompromised
- visiting a high-risk setting, e.g. a residential aged care facility, a hospital or a disability group home

### What do I do if I get a positive RAT result?

If you return a positive RAT result, no further testing is required. Do not seek a follow-up COVID-19 PCR test unless you are instructed to do so by Public Health.

If your test is positive using a RAT, follow the isolation protocols for a confirmed case and register your result at <https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/ratregister>.

## When do I need to register my positive RAT result?

You need to register your result at <https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/ratregister> as soon as possible – preferably on the same day as your test result.

Your completed RAT registration prompts WA Health to send you a text message explaining what the next steps after testing positive to COVID-19 are, with a link to a short online survey so you can let us know if you need any extra support while you're isolating.

Don't delete the text message from WA Health: it can be used as evidence of your COVID-19 positive status and can't be issued retrospectively.

## What does the message “You are currently in the COVID RAT Registration / Home Monitoring virtual waiting room” mean?

You may see this message at times of high demand on the website when logging your positive RAT result at <https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/ratregister>.

Keep the screen open – you will be automatically redirected to the registration page to record your positive result.

This usually takes just a few minutes, but if you can't wait, return to the page later in the day to register your positive result.

## Which RAT kit should I use?

RAT kits approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) can be used in WA. A list of approved kits can be found on the [TGA website](#).

## How do I use a RAT kit?

RATs test for the presence of COVID-19 from either saliva or nasal samples. Follow the instructions provided with your RAT kit to ensure accuracy of test results.

## Where can I get a RAT kit?

RAT kits are available for purchase from supermarkets, pharmacies and other retailers.

Western Australians who are close contacts are entitled to 10 free RATs each to help them meet testing requirements. You must be a close contact **with no symptoms** to collect your free RATs. You can collect RATs for other close contacts within your household.

You will need to wear a mask and follow the requirements for [close contacts](#) without symptoms leaving isolation during their 7 day close contact period.

Collection sites are listed on [WA.gov.au](http://WA.gov.au).

Free RAT kits are also available for concession card holders from local pharmacies. You can access up to 10 over a three-month period (with a maximum of five over a one-month period). Visit the [Australian Government Department of Health website](#) (external link) for more information.

Questions about the availability of RATs through specific retailers should be directed to the retailer.

## **I need to test my young child, is a RAT or PCR recommended?**

A PCR test is available for children of any age. All RAT kits contain guidance on their recommended use. Check the suitability of using the RAT on children and follow the instructions closely. Parents or guardians should perform or supervise RATs on children.

There is no requirement for an asymptomatic close contact who is aged 2 or under to have a RAT.

## **Can workplaces/business use RATs to screen patients/clients/staff/customers for COVID-19?**

It is up to the workplace if they wish to use RATs for screening purposes.

## **Does the employer or employee pay for the RATs?**

It is up to each employer to develop relevant workplace policies regarding the provision of RATs to employees.

Further information for business and industry is available at [https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A\\_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-information-for-business-and-industry](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-information-for-business-and-industry)

## **Where can I find more information on the use of RATs?**

More information on RATs is available online:

- Australian Government Business [COVID-19 rapid antigen tests for business owners](#)
- Australian Government Department of Health TGA [COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests - Guidance and checklist for businesses](#)
- Public Health Laboratory Network – Communicable Diseases Network Australia [Joint Statement on SARS-CoV-2 Rapid Antigen Tests](#)

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**This document can be made available in alternative formatson request for a person with disability.**

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