

## COVID Safe Testing Program – Q&A

### Testing Frequency

**Why do we need to test everyone? Shouldn't we just test those who have symptoms?**

Bringing kids back into schools and maintaining a healthy classroom is our top priority, which is why we recommend testing everyone.

According to the CDC, children are more likely than adults to be asymptomatic, meaning they don't show signs of sickness when infected with COVID-19. Given this, kids who appear healthy can still spread the virus to their teachers and peers, so they all need regular testing.

In addition, at the time of any given test, students, teachers, or staff may be presymptomatic, meaning that they've recently been infected and have not yet developed symptoms—but still could be contagious. The best way to avoid undetected infections and stop the spread of the virus early is to test everyone, and to do so on a frequent basis.

**How often do we need to test students, teachers, and staff for COVID-19?** The Rockefeller Foundation's public health experts recommend that K–12 schools test students for COVID-19 once per week, with testing for teachers and staff up to twice weekly. Our staff can work with you to develop a testing schedule that works best for your needs.

**If teachers and school staff are vaccinated, do they still need to be tested?** It depends on the requirements of the district, but we recommend that everyone be tested. While vaccinated people have a much lower risk of being infected, it is still possible, and testing helps identify those cases.

**What type of COVID-19 test will be used?** We use PCR (nasal swab and saliva spit) testing to detect the virus BEFORE the virus is transmissible and able to infect others Also, Antigen testing which can detect the virus when symptomatic and at or near peak infection.

### Swabbing and Saliva Spit

**I've heard that nasal swabbing is uncomfortable—is that true?** Our nasal swabs are short and easy to use. They're about the size of your everyday cotton swab and don't need to be inserted deeply into the nose. We selected a short and more comfortable swab for our testing program. The swabbing process is so simple that kids can do it themselves.

**Do teachers and school staff need to touch students' swabs?** Teachers and other school staff shouldn't have to touch student swabs. Older students will be able to swab themselves, and COVID Safe will provide staff members who are able to help younger children get swabbed.



If students need additional assistance, we provide instructional how-to videos to share with students and “how to collect your sample” posters.

**Is Saliva Testing as accurate as nasal swabbing?** Saliva testing is as effective as the standard nasopharyngeal tests (nasal swab), according to a study by investigators at McGill University. Saliva tests are simpler, more comfortable, and equally as accurate with the right amount of saliva sample.

## Testing Process

**How does the actual COVID-19 testing process work?** We provide schools with collection kits that includes Saliva PCR spit tests and PCR nasal swab tests and ‘How to’ instructions that make it easy and more comfortable for students to collect their own samples. With supervision, students will be able to quickly spit in a saliva collection tube or swab their own noses and place their swab in a test tube.

Teachers and staff can then easily place the tubes into provided shipping packaging, and arrange for the package to be picked up for transport to labs where the samples will be tested. Test results are ready within 24–48 hours of sample collection. Schools can choose whether they would like teachers, school staff, and families to receive results via text or email—or if the school would like to manage communication of test results on their own.

### **What if we can’t hire new staff for COVID-19 testing?**

Our testing program was designed to minimize the need for new staffing resources or clinical professionals. Existing staff and teachers can access training materials and support that enable them to oversee testing. In cases where schools need additional support, we can work with you to develop a plan that fits your needs.

## Next Steps

### **How do I create and implement a COVID-19 testing program for my school?**

The COVID Safe Testing Program offers a comprehensive, cost-effective solution that schools can adopt to quickly start COVID-19 testing. We designed the program based on recommendations from the nation’s leading COVID-19 testing experts at the CDC and the Rockefeller Foundation so that you don’t have to create your own program from scratch. We’ll be there to help guide you—starting with the onboarding process and through any questions that come up when the program is in action.

**How do I sign up my district or school?** Contact us at [COVIDSAFE@bitcare.co](mailto:COVIDSAFE@bitcare.co)

## References

1. Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations | CDC

2. [K-12-NTAP\\_FINAL.pdf \(rockefellerfoundation.org\)](#)

BITCARE