Testing for COVID-19

August 2021

## Where you can go to get tested

Testing is done in various places including inside a marquee or tent, inside your car at a drive-in testing centre, inside a portacabin, or at your medical centre. If you are in a car, the health worker doing the test will come to where you are parked and ask you to wind your window down.

If you think you have COVID-19, you must phone your GP or Healthline for an assessment before you go anywhere to be tested. You will be given advice about where to go to have the COVID-19 test done. If you cannot safely get there, or are too sick to travel, arrangements will be made by the GP or Healthline for you to be tested at home.

Sometimes there will be large testing centres set up for the public. When this happens, you can usually go to the testing centre without phoning anyone first. You might have to wait in line before you are tested.

The person doing the testing will be a health worker and should always be wearing a full set of personal protective equipment (PPE). This includes a facemask, eye-goggles or shield, a gown and gloves. This protects them and you. The health worker will change their gloves for every test and change all of their PPE every 2 to 4 hours, depending on the number of tests they have done.

## What happens when you get a COVID-19 test?

You may have your temperature taken. The health worker uses a forehead thermometer which is waved close to your forehead. They will explain the swabbing process before they begin.

The swab looks a bit like a long skinny cotton bud with a soft brush at one end. Depending on your symptoms, a GP or Nurse might also check your throat and chest.

The swabbing process takes about 10 seconds. The health worker will insert the swab in one nostril, and gently advance it until it touches the back of your throat – about 3-4 cm. They will gently turn the swab around inside your nose and then take it out. It can be an uncomfortable experience, tickling the back of your throat, and bringing tears to your eyes, and occasionally it can make you wretch. However, you are not sick.

If, for some reason, the health worker can’t reach the swab far enough, they might take a swab from your throat along with a swab from the front of your nostrils instead. They will insert the swab in your month and gently swab both sides of your throat and then swab inside each nostril.

The health worker will tell you how long it will take until you receive your COVID-19 test result.

### End