



Family FAQs About Testing



1. WHY ARE SCHOOLS OFFERING FREE REGULAR TESTING?

Testing alerts us about new infections, & contact tracing & isolation keeps the virus from spreading. [Watch & learn more here.](#)

School-based testing, along with vaccination, masking & other safety measures helps keep schools open.

If your school isn't testing & you want them to, use this easy to personalize [sample letter to send to your school and the school district.](#)



2. WHAT DOES TESTING LOOK LIKE IN SCHOOLS?

Some testing programs include:

Testing for students that start to show symptoms in school.

Weekly testing of all students & staff to find infections before they spread.

Less frequent regular testing to determine if the school's safety measures are working to stop the spread.

"Test to stay" which includes frequent testing of close contacts so they can stay in school instead of staying at home.



3. HOW MUCH DOES TESTING COST?

School-based testing is free. The state pays for testing with federal funding.



4. WHO WILL TEST MY CHILD?

Testing involves collecting a sample from your child. Your child might collect their own sample by swabbing just inside their nose or by drooling into a tube. Or, trained personnel (often trained by the health department or testing vendors) like a nurse, school staff, or trained volunteers will collect the sample.



5. WHAT WILL MY CHILD EXPERIENCE DURING A TEST?

In some cases, your child will collect their own sample by **swabbing just inside their nose**, while being observed by trained staff. Your child will place the swab just inside each nostril, make 3 rotations, & put the swab, swab-side down, in a collection tube. Your child might feel a tickle or a scratch when they do this. [Watch it here.](#)

In other cases, a trained staff, trained volunteer, or healthcare provider, like a school nurse will collect the sample from your child's nose using the same **just-inside-the-nose** method.

Or, your child might collect their own sample by drooling saliva into a tube while being observed to make sure the sample is collected correctly. [Watch it here.](#)



6. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD TESTS POSITIVE?

In general, your child will wait in a private room while the school contacts you for pick-up.

In general, the school will ask your child to isolate for 7-10 days from the date of the positive test or until symptoms subside.



7. WHAT HAPPENS IF MY CHILD IS A CLOSE CONTACT OF SOMEONE WHO TESTS POSITIVE?

In general, your child should be tested 5-7 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive.

As a close contact, your child might be asked to stay home or “quarantine.” Different schools have different policies for how long your child will need to stay home, so check with your school. These policies might be different depending on if your child is vaccinated.

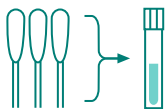
If your child is a close contact & their school uses “test to stay”, they may be able to stay in school as long as they test frequently and their results are negative. But test to stay approaches can vary. For example, some schools might not allow athletes to participate in test to stay because they’re often in close contact with other athletes.



8. WHAT HAPPENS TO MY CHILD’S TESTING DATA?

Your child’s health information is protected by federal & state laws. This means that only a small number of health & school officials will be alerted if your child tests positive.

School leaders will work with the health department to notify your child’s close contacts in order to prevent spread, but they will not disclose your child’s identity.



9. WHAT IS POOLED OR BATCH TESTING?

Pooled testing is a type of regular test for people without symptoms that allows multiple samples to be processed at once, which saves time & money.

The samples from multiple people are combined (“pooled”) & tested as one big sample.

If the pooled test result is negative, all the people whose samples were in the pool are considered negative.

If the pooled test result is positive, all samples will be retested individually to find the infected person/people.



10. CAN MY CHILD OPT-OUT OF TESTING?

Some schools might require that your child participate in testing to attend in-person learning.

In other schools, your child can still attend in-person learning even if they don’t test, but may not be able to participate in sports or other extracurricular activities.



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