

## Governor Walz Announces Expansion of COVID-19 Community Testing Capacity

Sunday testing begins October 17 in Moorhead and Winona, Friday testing begins October 15 in Mankato and St. Cloud

State sites offer free saliva testing to Minnesotans

Today, Governor Tim Walz announced an expansion of testing capacity in the state's COVID-19 community testing network in order to meet increased demand. Beginning October 15, Friday testing will be offered at the state sites in Mankato and St. Cloud. Beginning October 17, Sunday testing will be offered at the Moorhead and Winona sites.

**“Minnesotans deserve to have more no-cost COVID-19 testing options, and we’re stepping up to expand access to that testing across the state,”** said Governor Walz. **“Testing for COVID-19 keeps our children safe in the classroom and provides peace of mind to parents and families. Through the at-home testing program and community sites in cities around the state, Minnesotans have more opportunities to choose the option that is best for their families.”**

**“As the mom of a third-grader, I’m personally grateful for Minnesota’s at-home test program,”** said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. **“The state has worked hard to make a variety of options accessible to all Minnesotans—I encourage all families, including those with kids who are too young to be vaccinated, to take advantage of what’s out there.”**

The sites will be adding an additional testing day to increase their capacity. Each site is increasing its weekly capacity by approximately 500 tests for a max weekly capacity of approximately 2,500 per site:

- Adding Friday Testing Beginning October 15
  - Mankato: Monday–Friday, 11am–6pm
  - St. Cloud: Monday–Friday, 11am–6pm
- Sunday Testing Beginning October 17
  - Moorhead: Sunday, 11am–4pm; Monday–Thursday, 11am–6pm
  - Winona: Sunday, 11am–4pm; Monday–Thursday, 11am–6pm

Demand for COVID-19 testing has increased throughout Minnesota. To tackle the Delta variant head on, the state has steadily expanded its testing capacity, first by opening four new community sites in Bloomington, Lino Lakes, Minneapolis and Saint Paul in August and September. Last week, the state announced it was adding a weekend testing day and doubling capacity at the Duluth community testing site to approximately 1,000 tests per day.

**“With students back in school and activities moving inside as fall continues its arrival, testing is still vital to protecting our families from COVID-19,”** said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm. **“By expanding our robust, collaborative testing program, we have removed testing obstacles for families across the state. In addition to getting vaccinated, social distancing, masking, and staying home when sick, we know testing can help us slow the spread of the COVID-19 and limit its negative impacts in our communities.”**

At the state's community sites, testing last week was up roughly 10 percent from the prior week. Testing capacity through the state's community testing site program will expand further as the state continues to assess current and projected testing needs.

Locations and hours of all the state's community testing sites [can be found here](#).

Testing is open to Minnesotans who believe they need a COVID-19 test, with or without insurance. Testing is free at all of the state's community testing sites. Participants that have health insurance will be asked for their insurance information so the state can bill their insurance company on their behalf. If a person is uninsured or if insurance does not cover some or all of the cost, the state will cover the difference, so testing remains no cost to all.

State guidance on who should get tested can be found on the [COVID-19 Testing](#) webpage.

Those who arrive for a test should avoid eating, drinking, chewing, or smoking anything for at least 30 minutes before being tested. Once they arrive at a testing location, they will self-administer the test by salivating into a funnel attached to a small tube. Site staff will be available on-site to monitor the collection process.

While walk-ins are welcome, people seeking testing at state sites can still [schedule an appointment](#). Tests will be processed in Minnesota at the saliva lab in Oakdale. Results will be provided via email in approximately 24-28 hours after the lab receives the testing sample.

Accessibility accommodations are offered at the state's community sites. To request an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), spoken language, American Sign Language and/or other accommodation, Minnesotans are encouraged to call the Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 Public Hotline, 1-833-431-2053, between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturday. Translative services are also available on-site. Patients are encouraged to make requests two to three business days before their visit to ensure time to coordinate accommodations.