

## Governor Walz Announces New Online Program to Provide At-Home Rapid COVID-19 Tests to Minnesotans

*Additional changes to state testing programs are designed to meet the level and type of demand for testing*

Governor Tim Walz today announced a new program that will allow Minnesotans to order free rapid COVID-19 tests online for delivery directly to their homes.

Beginning March 29, Minnesotans will be able to order two test kits (for a total of four tests) per home through an online ordering system. Minnesota has secured 500,000 test kits (for a total of 1 million at-home tests) and the program will be available until all the test kits are ordered. Minnesota will use this program as a model for providing more access to COVID-19 rapid testing in the months ahead.

**“Our goal has always been to ensure that when Minnesotans need a test, they can get one quickly and easily,”** said Governor Walz. **“Even as case numbers decline, it’s important that Minnesotans test for COVID-19 if they are feeling sick. That’s why we’re continuing to work to make tests easily accessible – now and in the future.”**

**“COVID-19 testing remains important for Minnesotans who feel sick or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19,”** said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. **“The program we’re announcing today will make it simple to get at-home testing to keep on hand when Minnesota families need it.”**

**“COVID-19 testing remains a key tool for Minnesotans,”** Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm. **“Even during times of lower community transmission, there are plenty of reasons a person might want to know whether they are infected and a potential risk to others around them. We are working hard to make this testing as easy and barrier-free as possible, and at-home testing has clearly become a preferred option for many Minnesotans. This program helps Minnesotans access this tool in the manner they want.”**

Minnesotans will be able to visit [mn.gov/covid19](https://mn.gov/covid19) to request two test kits, or four total tests, per household. Tests will be available starting on Tuesday, March 29, and will be available until supply has been exhausted. If this program proves successful and valuable for Minnesotans, the State will count on it as a key part of the response to future case surges.

In addition to this program, the State of Minnesota has secured nearly 5 million rapid at-home test kits for community partners, schools, and childcare facilities since September 2021.

**Vault At-Home Testing Program to Sunset**

The State of Minnesota's at-home PCR testing program through Vault Health will end on March 31. Minnesotans who have Vault PCR tests at home will be able to use them until they expire, or until December 31, 2022, whichever is first.

The at-home testing program was a unique innovation from the State of Minnesota that helped provide at-home PCR testing at no cost to Minnesotans. This program was a key piece of Minnesota's nation-leading COVID-19 response. But demand for Vault's at-home testing program has declined significantly. Last week, Vault delivered around 1,400 tests to Minnesotans, compared to more than 16,600 tests per week in mid-January. Sunsetting the at-home testing program will allow the state to focus on providing other forms of testing.

Rapid at-home antigen tests – like those Minnesotans can begin ordering March 29 – provide more flexibility to Minnesota families who need to monitor COVID-19 symptoms. The tests can be done at home and results are delivered within minutes, with no lab delivery required.

### **When to Get Tested**

Even though fewer Minnesotans are getting sick with COVID-19, testing continues to be important for preventing the spread of the virus.

To keep COVID-19 from spreading, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends people should use testing if:

- They have symptoms of the virus.
- They have had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.
- They are returning from international or domestic travel.
- They attended a high-risk event.
- They work in a setting that has regular, close contact with many people.

Minnesotans can find up-to-date guidance on when to get tested [here](#).

### **How To Get a Test**

Minnesotans have other options to access COVID-19 testing.

Through the federal government, Minnesotans can order free rapid at-home tests at [CovidTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov). Food banks, local public health agencies, community groups, and other community health organizations may also have free tests available.

Costs for over-the-counter at-home COVID-19 tests are now required to be covered by health plans offered by insurance companies, employers, and groups under actions taken by the Biden Administration. In some circumstances, Minnesotans can receive free tests by showing their insurance card at a store. Minnesotans should check with their health plan prior to purchasing at-home tests to ensure they are following the steps necessary to have costs covered.

Anyone can walk in or schedule an appointment for a test at one of the state's free [COVID-19 Community Testing sites](#) or find a testing option near them through the state's [Find Testing Locations map](#)