

Rapid Antigen Testing – quick guide for staff

Rapid Antigen Tests often abbreviated 'RATs' return results faster than the PCR test and are good at identifying people who have Covid when they are most infectious. As the community incidence of COVID-19 decreases and we know more about Omicron, we're seeing less value in staff testing for surveillance.

You do not need to do a RAT for routine surveillance anymore. You should continue to do RATs if you fall into one of the categories in the table below:

- If you are unwell with Covid symptoms (unless you have had covid in the last 28 days)
- If you work in an ultra green area
- If you are a household contact and coming to work
- If you have been covid positive and you are testing to return to work, once well.

All test results (positive or negative) must be recorded in [My Covid Record](#)

Who is being tested?	When	What happens if the test is positive
Staff working in an 'ultra-green' area (NICU, adult and child cancer units)	Before every shift at work or at home.	<p>We currently consider Rapid Antigen Tests to be diagnostic.</p> <p>Negative result – Staff member can return to work unless too unwell to be at work in the case of staff with symptoms.</p> <p>Positive result – Follow the positive case guidance</p> <p>In some cases, you may be asked to do a PCR test. We will explain why if that is required.</p>
Staff who have become unwell at work with Covid-19 symptoms	Before you come to work	
Staff as part of as part of Covid-19 contact and case management	As per the protocol provided to you.	

There are a range of rapid antigen tests authorised for import and supply by the Ministry of Health which means the brand of test you might be using may change. All the tests work in basically the same way, and all use a front of the nose nasal swab to collect the sample for the rapid antigen test. [There are instructions here.](#) We are supplying staff with tests to take home and can get these where you usually work or ask your manager where to collect them. You can also collect tests from community collection sites.