



COVID-19 Testing for Children

01/14/2021

We must all do our part to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 as much as possible, and individual actions and behaviours matter. For parents, this means limiting your children's contact with people outside your household, [screening](#) your children for COVID-19 symptoms daily, and getting them tested if required.

When does a child need to get a COVID-19 test?

If a child has any **one** of the following symptoms, they should get a COVID-19 test:

- fever or chills (temperature of 37.8 or greater)
- cough (more than usual if chronic cough)
- difficulty breathing
- decrease or loss of smell or taste
- runny nose or stuffy nose
- sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- headache
- unusual or extreme tiredness or muscle aches

If your child has one or more symptoms book a test at one of [Ottawa's Assessment Centres](#) or contact your health care provider to discuss. Even if just one person in your home is showing symptoms, **everyone**, including siblings and other people in the household, must also self-isolate (even if they don't have symptoms) until the test results are received.

Is testing still important with the shift to virtual learning?

COVID-19 testing must continue **even** if children are not attending school in person, to help make schools safer when they do return. Although children are participating in school virtually, the infection can spread from children to members of their household and then to others in the community. This spread has resulted in added pressures on the health care system and could lead to the extension of the lockdown and school closures. Testing and self-isolation can decrease spread in the community.

Where can my child get tested? How long will it take to get the results?

All Assessment Centres and Care Clinics have capacity for same-day testing. If you need to make an appointment to get a COVID-19 test, there will be one available to you at one of Ottawa's testing sites. Additionally, with the move to appointment-based testing, there are no long lines and results are available within 48 hours at this time. Online booking of a test is quick and efficient. You can also call to book an appointment. Book your appointment [here](#).

What should I expect when my child gets tested?

A nasal swab is done to collect a mucus sample from the inside of your child's nose. Although the swab will feel funny, Assessment Centre staff are trained with a kid-friendly approach to make sure the test is done quickly and safely while minimizing discomfort. You can watch this [CHEO video](#) together with your child to prepare for an upcoming COVID-19 test.

[CHEO video \(FR\)](#)