



FAQs - Extended use of rapid tests

Date: 18 December 2020

1. Who can have a rapid test done?

Until now rapid tests have been reserved for those who meet the FOPH's [sampling criteria \(testing criteria\)](#). These were people with symptoms and those who had received a notification from the SwissCovid App. Rapid tests could also be used in outbreak investigations.

Now all asymptomatic people (people without symptoms) can have a rapid test, even if they do not meet the [sampling criteria](#).

2. Who will pay for rapid tests?

Unlike people who meet the [sampling criteria](#), asymptomatic people must pay the costs of rapid tests themselves or have them paid by the party that initiated the test (for example their employer).

3. What rapid tests are allowed?

To enable even broader testing of the population, in future pharmacies, doctor's practices and test centres will be allowed to conduct any type of validated rapid test with market approval. Previously only rapid antigen tests by means of a nose and throat swab were permitted.

4. Where and by whom are rapid tests done?

Rapid tests can be done in pharmacies, doctor's practices and test centres. The staff conducting tests must be trained accordingly.

5. Why is the use of rapid tests being extended?

The scientific evidence, new testing technologies and expanded testing capacities now permit the testing of asymptomatic people. This increases the range of options for achieving the goal of breaking infection chains, as asymptomatic people can now be tested in a private or home setting. Rapid tests are a way of supplementing and reinforcing existing precautionary measures (for example in hotels, at trade fairs and international conventions or sporting events).

6. Who validates rapid tests?

Rapid tests are independently validated by labs that have been licensed by Swissmedic.

Further information:

Federal Office of Public Health, Communication and Media Section, www.bag.admin.ch
This publication is also available in German, French and Italian.

7. Can I also order a rapid test on the internet and do it at home?

The FOPH advises against this. If you order a test online for delivery to your home, you often cannot check the origin, or the certification and validation, of the test. Rapid tests should be done with professionals taking responsibility.

8. Rapid tests are less sensitive than PCR tests. Is there a risk of a false negative for an asymptomatic person?

Experience has now been gained with rapid antigen tests and there is more scientific evidence that these tests can identify people who are currently contagious with sufficient accuracy. It still has to be ensured that the new additional types of rapid tests that are on or about to come onto the market are at least as reliable as the existing rapid antigen tests.

9. What has to be done if the result turns out positive?

In such a case the person affected should immediately have a PCR test by way of confirmation. The federal government will pay the costs of this test on the basis of the Epidemics Act.

10. Can a tourist have a rapid test done in Switzerland to be able to then return to their country of origin?

Yes. That is possible if their country of origin accepts a rapid test for entry to the country. It is the responsibility of the tourist to find out the entry requirements for their country of origin.

If the person has symptoms and does not meet the [sampling requirements](#), they must pay for the rapid test themselves. If the test is positive, the person affected should have a PCR test by way of confirmation; this test will be paid by the Swiss federal government.

11. Does the FOPH recommend rapid tests before Christmas for people to visit their relatives?

The FOPH has no recommendation on this. Each person is free to choose whether they want to have a rapid test. It should be noted that a negative rapid test is not valid for more than one day (the day of the test). Also, the extended use of rapid tests is no substitute for the FOPH's existing hygiene and social distancing rules.

12. Is testing at the workplace compulsory?

Testing is basically voluntary. Employers are only entitled to have their employees tested within the limits of mandatory law. Mandatory law includes, for example, safeguarding employee privacy and data protection. Testing must be justified on grounds relating to work performance or protection of other employees or third parties (customers or patients). The whole circumstances must be taken into account, including, for example, the epidemiological situation and the other precautionary measures that are in place.

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