

Rutgers University COVID-19 Testing Statement and FAQs

Rutgers University COVID-19 Testing Strategy

Rutgers University is currently offering SARS-CoV-2 PCR saliva testing (for the active virus that leads to COVID-19) to specified groups of employees and students who are working and learning on campus. Rutgers will utilize a targeted testing approach based on the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within the university community to identify, and receive requests on behalf of, groups to be tested. The university Testing Protocol Action Group (TPAG) will determine which groups of students or employees should be recommended and/or required to complete testing through the Rutgers COVID-19 testing program.

SARS-CoV-2 testing will be recommended for strategic reasons based on risk assessments of individuals or groups to help mitigate the risk of transmission. Testing will help detect asymptomatic occurrences of infection and prevent further transmission by enabling contact tracing and providing guidance about self-isolation and health precautions. The risk-assessment focus of our testing strategy means that testing will not be required or recommended for all employees or students.

The university is only offering testing to individuals who are not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, muscle aches, loss of sense of smell or taste, or stomach upset). Those who are experiencing symptoms should self-isolate and contact their health care provider. Students who utilize Student Health Services as their primary health care provider should contact the Student Health Services office designated for their campus.

This strategic approach is informed by the guidance put forth by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and will use a combination of testing methods to test students and employees at higher risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. Testing in the health care workforce will be coordinated with our health care system partners to provide as much consistency as possible.

The university is utilizing Saliva PCR tests for this program and is offering the testing via drive through clinics, walk-in services, and/or departmental distribution, based upon the needs of the group to be tested and the availability of resources. Testing is available on each of the five Rutgers campuses: RBHS–Newark, Rutgers–Newark, RBHS–New Brunswick/Piscataway, Rutgers–New Brunswick, and Rutgers–Camden.

University SARS-CoV-2 testing protocols will be reviewed and updated regularly, under the authority of the university TPAG, which is chaired by the Chancellor of Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences/Rutgers University Executive Vice President for Health Affairs. The strategy may change as public health guidance changes and as new scientific data is reported on the efficacy of various testing methods and other factors.

Testing strategy decisions will be based on risk assessments and other factors below, as well as case identification/outbreaks.

TPAG is informed by:

- CDC and NJDOH Guidance
- Health system partner requirements
- Testing capacity/logistics

Risk assessments will be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- Ability to maintain physical distancing while completing activities on campus
- Working and/or learning in a patient-care environment
- Exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case
- Congregate living environment (e.g. residence halls)
- Working and/or learning in an environment where they may expose individuals who are at risk for severe illness
- Other factors that may increase or decrease risk based on the evolving science and public health data

Additional testing may be recommended based on surveillance data, case identification, and contact tracing follow-up and strategy as the situation evolves on campus.

Repeat testing for particular groups may be required and would be subject to the review by the Testing Protocol Action Group. Repeat testing requirements are determined by evaluating repeated exposure, new increase in exposure, continuing risk of spread to high-risk individuals, and if environmental rates of community exposure have increased.

New scientific evidence or public health guidance may trigger a change in these recommendations.

Rutgers employees who feel a group should be tested should work with their supervisor to review instructions and complete the Testing Request form.

Rutgers University COVID-19 Testing Frequently Asked Questions

About the University's Testing Strategy

- Q** *Is Rutgers offering COVID-19 Testing?*
- A** Rutgers University is currently offering SARS-CoV-2 PCR testing (for the active virus that leads to COVID-19) to specified groups of employees and students who are working and learning on campus. Rutgers will utilize a targeted testing approach based on the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within the university community to identify, and receive requests on behalf of, groups to be tested.
- Q** *How was the university's testing strategy developed?*
- A** This strategic approach is informed by the guidance put forth by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and will use a combination of testing methods to test students and employees at higher risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19.
- Q** *Who determines which groups should be tested?*
- A** The university Testing Protocol Action Group will determine which groups of students or employees should be recommended and/or required to complete testing through the Rutgers COVID-19 testing program.
- Q** *How are groups identified for testing?*
- A** The university Testing Protocol Action Group will recommend SARS-CoV-2 testing based on risk assessments of individuals or groups to help mitigate the risk of transmission for strategic reasons. Testing will help detect asymptomatic occurrences of infection and prevent further transmission by enabling contact tracing and providing guidance about self-isolation and health precautions.
- Q** *Is testing recommended for everyone at the university?*
- A** The risk-assessment focus of our testing strategy means that testing will not be required or recommended for all employees or students.
- Q** *What criteria is the university Testing Protocol Action Group considering to qualify university groups for testing?*
- A** Testing strategy decisions will be based on risk assessments and other factors below, as well as case identification/outbreaks.
- The university Testing Protocol Action Group is informed by:
 - CDC and NJDOH Guidance
 - Health system partner requirements
 - Testing capacity/logistics
 - Risk assessments will be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:
 - Ability to maintain physical distancing while completing activities on campus
 - Working and/or learning in a patient-care environment
 - Exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 case
 - Congregate living environment (e.g. residence halls)

- Working and/or learning in an environment where they may expose individuals who are at risk for severe illness
- Other factors that may increase or decrease risk based on the evolving science and public health data

Q *I was notified that I am included in a group identified for testing—why do I need to be tested?*

A The university Testing Protocol Action Group is recommending SARS-CoV-2 testing based on risk assessments of individuals or groups to help mitigate the risk of transmission for strategic reasons. If you have been notified that you are in a group identified for testing, it is because an administrator and supervisor in your department indicated that you are within a group that meets the criteria for recommended testing. Testing will help detect asymptomatic occurrences of infection and prevent further transmission by enabling contact tracing and providing guidance about self-isolation and health precautions.

Q *What will happen if I don't want to take the test?*

A Testing will be offered, but in most cases, not required. Those where testing will be mandatory to work or learn are in settings such as health systems, agencies, or k-12 school systems. Testing will be required for students desiring to live in on-campus housing.

Those who have been in close contact with individuals with confirmed COVID-19 infection may be offered testing, but it will not be required.

Q *I am returning to campus for work/study and would like to be tested but haven't received word that I'm in a group that has been identified by the university Testing Protocol Action Group to receive testing. Can I get tested?*

A The Rutgers testing program is not able to test all faculty, staff, and students associated with Rutgers. Rutgers employees who feel a group should be tested should work with their supervisor to review instructions and complete the [Testing Request form](#). You can receive testing outside of the Rutgers testing program through your health care provider, local pharmacy, or state testing site.

Q *I believe I should be tested or my unit should be tested—what should I do?*

A Individual testing requests should be directed to your personal health care provider. If you believe that your department should be tested, please direct that suggestion to your department leadership who may make a request for testing through the university Testing Protocol Action Group by completing the [Testing Request form](#).

Q *I am returning to campus for work/study and am concerned about my interactions with colleagues and peers. If my colleagues/peers and I are not being screened for COVID-19, how can I feel safe?*

A The safety and well-being of the Rutgers community is a shared responsibility among all of its members. All members of the Rutgers community should monitor symptoms daily and stay home if they are ill, wear face coverings to help reduce the spread of disease, practice social distancing, wash hands frequently, and wipe down frequently used surfaces. Performing these measures will help to prevent disease transmission.

Please visit the [Returning to Rutgers](#) plan shared on coronavirus.rutgers.edu to learn more about how the university is working to keep our community safe.

Q *Do I have to take this test if I already had a positive result on an antibody test?*

A Yes. Rutgers does not recognize the antibody test as a valid test for purposes of identifying disease.

Q *Is Rutgers offering antibody testing?*

A No.

Q *Is this testing mandatory?*

A Testing will be offered, but in most cases not required. Those where testing will be mandatory to work or learn are in settings where testing is required such as health systems, agencies, or school systems. Testing will be required for students desiring to live in on-campus housing. As groups are identified for testing, the university Testing Protocol Action Group will indicate the level of testing recommended—not offered, offered, highly recommended, expected.

Those who have been in close contact with individuals with confirmed COVID-19 infection may be offered testing, but it will not be required.

Based on these balanced considerations, the university Testing Protocol Action Group or public health experts may determine that other groups have a testing requirement as we move through the coming months.

Q *Do I need to be retested?*

A If you have been notified that you are in a group identified for testing, your testing instructions will include a schedule for repeat testing if it is deemed necessary. Repeat testing requirements are determined by evaluating a group's repeated exposure, new increase in exposure, continuing risk of spread to high-risk individuals, and if environmental rates of community exposure have increased. Repeat testing may also be required if an administrator or supervisor in your department indicated that your group was newly at risk of meeting the requirements listed above.

Because Rutgers is a multifaceted organization in which many of our community members fill several roles, you may also be identified for testing as a result of risk associated with a different set of responsibilities or group affiliation. If this happens, please contact the appropriate office of student or occupational health to determine your testing needs.

Retesting may also be required if your original test result returned inconclusive results, in which case you will be notified by the appropriate student or occupational health office.

Q *How often do I need to be tested?*

A Likely, just once. If you have been notified that you are in a group identified for testing, your testing instructions will include a schedule for repeat testing if it is deemed necessary. Repeat testing requirements are determined by evaluating a group's repeated exposure, new increase in exposure, continuing risk of spread to high-risk individuals, and if environmental rates of community exposure have increased. Repeat

testing may also be required if an administrator or supervisor in your department indicated that your group was newly at risk of meeting the requirements listed above.

Because Rutgers is a multifaceted organization in which many of our community members fill several roles, you may also be identified for testing as a result of risk associated with a different set of responsibilities or group affiliation. If this happens, please contact the appropriate office of student or occupational health to determine your testing needs.

Retesting may also be required if your original test result returned inconclusive results, in which case you will be notified by the appropriate student or occupational health office.

Q *Can I be retested?*

- A** If you have been notified that you are in a group identified for testing, your testing instructions will include a schedule for repeat testing if it is deemed necessary. Repeat testing requirements are determined by evaluating a group's repeated exposure, new increase in exposure, continuing risk of spread to high-risk individuals, and if environmental rates of community exposure have increased. Repeat testing may also be required if an administrator or supervisor in your department indicated that your group was newly at risk of meeting the requirements listed above.

Retesting may also be required if your original test result returned inconclusive results, in which case you will be notified by the appropriate student or occupational health office.

Testing Details and Notification Information

Q *What test is Rutgers using for its testing program?*

- A** Rutgers utilizing Saliva PCR tests for this program. The test is a [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) Emergency Use Authorization authorized molecular test](#) that uses a quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR) to identify the presence of viral transcripts which, if present, confirm an active infection of COVID-19.

Q *How reliable is the test?*

- A** The test meets FDA sensitivity and specificity standards for the detection of COVID-19. The use of saliva as the primary test material is directly comparable to all other sample types currently used for testing. Positive tests results are very reliable; however, an individual could be tested too early in the course of their illness to detect the virus, resulting in a false negative test.

Q *How will the tests be conducted?*

- A** The university is offering the testing via drive through clinics, walk-in services, and/or departmental distribution, based upon the needs of the group to be tested and the availability of resources.

Q *At what locations are tests being conducted?*

- A** Testing is available on each of the five Rutgers campuses: RBHS–Newark, Rutgers–Newark, RBHS–New Brunswick/Piscataway, Rutgers–New Brunswick, and Rutgers–Camden.

- Q** *How will tests for health care workers be arranged?*
- A** Testing in the health care workforce will be coordinated with our health care system partners to provide as much consistency as possible.
- Q** *Will test-results data including positive test results be shared with the university community?*
- A** Identifying information will never be shared publicly. Aggregate test results and total number of tests performed through the Rutgers strategic testing program are shared on the university's testing program dashboard at coronavirus.rutgers.edu/health-and-safety/testing-program-dashboard.
- Q** *If I tested positive in the past, should I be screened again?*
- A** If you have already tested positive for COVID-19, you should not be retested at this time.
- Q** *If I have tested negative in the past, can/should I be tested again?*
- A** Yes, you can be tested again if you are in a group authorized by the university Testing Protocol Action Group for testing.

Repeat testing for particular groups may be required and would be subject to the review by the Testing Protocol Action Group.

Cyclical repeated testing in the absence of symptoms or a particular high-risk exposure may be recommended for select groups, but is not recommended for all groups at this time.

- Q** *I am not feeling well. Should I be tested through Rutgers Testing Program?*
- A** If you are experiencing any symptoms related to COVID-19, you must stay home, notify your supervisor as soon as possible, and contact your personal health care provider or student health to discuss testing and treatment. Symptoms may include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, muscle aches, loss of sense of smell or taste, or stomach upset.

The Rutgers Testing Program is designed for asymptomatic individuals in an attempt to contain the spread of disease through asymptomatic transmission.

- Q** *What type of sample is required? How will it be collected?*
- A** The Rutgers Testing Program utilizes the saliva PCR test to identify virus particles. Salvia is deposited into a test tube, similar to giving a specimen for one the well-known commercial genetic testing companies. As compared with the nasopharyngeal swab method, this testing method reduces risk of transmission, reduces use of personal protective equipment and can be done at home.
- Q** *When testing is required or expected (e.g. for a clinical experience), can I submit testing from a source outside of Rutgers?*
- A** Yes, you can upload valid PCR test result documents to [Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety COVID-19 Testing website](#). Only FDA authorized PCR test will be accepted. Antibody tests are NOT acceptable.
- Q** *I've been advised that I'm in a group identified for testing, how do I proceed with arranging my test?*
- A** Once you have been authorized to receive testing, you will receive a message from Student or Occupational Health, or your department that offers guidance regarding how

to receive testing and includes a testing questionnaire that must be completed on the [Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety COVID-19 Testing website](#). Testing will be organized through your department or school in conjunction with Occupational Health or Student Health

Those who have concerns about accessing their official university email account should work with your supervisor.

Q *Are there any fees associated with the university testing? If so, who pays for the test?*

A Claims for testing will be submitted by the lab to your health insurance. No copay or coinsurance fee is to be charged for COVID-19 related testing or services. Testing done through Rutgers Student Health or Rutgers COVID testing Program is at zero cost to students. The test is billed through the students' insurance. For students or employees who may not have health insurance, costs will be covered by the university. If a billing statement from Accurate Diagnostics Lab (ADL) is received or a COVID-19 test, please call ADL to answer information about your insurance (telephone: 732-839-0843). Please call even if you do not have health insurance. Uncovered or denied charges for COVID-19 testing will be paid by the university.

Q *What if I don't have insurance, will I be charged a fee to be tested?*

A No.

Q *How long will it take to receive my results?*

A Results will typically be available about 48-72 hours from the time the sample is submitted to the lab.

Q *How will I find out my results?*

A You will be notified via email when your test results are available for viewing. You can access your results by logging into the [Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety COVID-19 Testing website](#) using your netID and password (two-step authentication is required – to enable two-step authentication please visit contact OIT for instructions). From here you can print the test result and a clearance letter for your supervisor.

Those who have tested positive will receive phone notification from Occupational Health or Student Health.

Test Result Interpretation and Response

Q *What will happen if I test positive?*

A A positive test indicates the presence of the novel coronavirus in the sample that was tested. Individuals who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 may never develop symptoms or you may develop symptoms in the future. It is possible to transmit the virus even in the absence of symptoms. **You will need to self-isolate for at least 10 days to prevent transmission to others.** If your test result is positive, someone from Occupational or Student Health will contact you to provide instructions and answer questions. In addition, you will be contacted by the local health department in an effort to identify any additional close contact you may have to help identify others who may be at risk for disease and again help to reduce transmission and contain the virus. Please notify your supervisor and contact UHR OneSource for appropriate leave information.

Rutgers will store the individual data in a secure electronic environment. While individual results will never be reported, aggregate results for all testing done through the Rutgers testing program will be tracked and reviewed by the Rutgers Testing Protocol Action Group to monitor community health.

Positive tests for COVID-19 are by law reportable to the New Jersey Department of Health. All laboratories doing testing must report results. The health care provider ordering the testing may also report positive testing to the local health department. Reporting to the local health department facilitates the processes for contact tracing, an important aspect of trying to reduce the transmission of disease. Others in your workplace may be contacted for contact tracing, but your name will not be released.

Your supervisor will be notified that you are not cleared to return to work to ensure that safety measures are being taken in your workplace. Your close contacts will be asked to quarantine for 14 days.

Q *What will happen if I test negative?*

- A** A negative test means that the novel coronavirus is not detected in the sample that was tested. Individuals who test negative may still become infected in the future and need to follow all recommended workplace and community precautions. There is a chance of a false negative. A second test within 1-3 weeks will often help reduce this false negative rate.

Rutgers will store the individual data in a secure electronic environment. While individual results will never be reported, aggregate results for all testing done through the Rutgers testing program will be tracked and reviewed by the Rutgers Testing Protocol Action Group to monitor community health.

Q *What will happen if I don't want to take the test?*

- A** Testing will be offered, but in most cases, not required. Those where testing will be mandatory to work or learn are in settings such as health systems, agencies, or k-12 school systems. Testing will be required for students desiring to live in on-campus housing.

Those who have been in close contact with individuals with confirmed COVID-19 infection will be offered testing, but it will not be required.

Q *What does it mean if I test positive?*

- A** A positive test indicates the presence of the novel coronavirus in the sample that was tested. You may develop symptoms in the future, or you may never develop symptoms. It is possible to transmit the virus even in the absence of symptoms. **You will need to self-isolate for at least 10 days to prevent transmission to others.** If your test result is positive, someone from Occupational or Student Health will contact you to provide instructions and answer questions. In addition, you will be contacted by the local health department in an effort to identify any additional close contact you may have to help identify others who may be at risk for disease and again help to reduce transmission and contain the virus. Please notify your supervisor and contact UHR OneSource for appropriate leave information.

Q *What does it mean if I test negative?*

- A** A negative test means that the novel coronavirus is not detected by the test at this time.

Individuals who test negative may still become infected in the future and need to follow all recommended workplace and community precautions. There is a chance of a false negative. A second test within 1-3 weeks will often help reduce this false negative rate.

Q *What will Rutgers do with these results?*

- A** Rutgers will store the individual data in a secure electronic environment. While individual results will never be reported, aggregate results for all testing done through the Rutgers testing program will be tracked and reviewed by the Rutgers Testing Protocol Action Group to monitor community health. Aggregate test results and total number of tests performed through the Rutgers strategic testing program are shared on the university's testing program dashboard at coronavirus.rutgers.edu/health-and-safety/testing-program-dashboard.

All laboratories conducting testing are required by law to report results to the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). The health care provider ordering the testing may also report positive testing to the local health department. Reporting positive cases to the local health department facilitates the processes for contact tracing - an important aspect of trying to reduce the transmission of disease. If you have tested positive, others you have come into contact with, including individuals in your workplace, may be contacted for contact tracing, but your name will not be released.

If you have tested positive your supervisor will be notified that you are not cleared to return to work to ensure that safety measures are being taken in your workplace. Your close contacts will be asked to quarantine for 14 days.

Q *If I test positive, how long will I be required to be out of work?*

- A** You must self-isolate at home for at least 10 days from the date of the positive test. Should you become symptomatic during that time, consult your health care provider. Your period of self-isolation may be extended to 10 days from symptom onset and 1-3 days after resolution of fever and improvement of symptoms. Occupational Health or Student Health will inform you when you may return to campus. With supervisor approval, if telecommuting is an option given your job function, you may work remotely during the period of self-isolation as long as you are well enough to do so safely.

Q *If I test positive and have to be out of work, how will I be paid?*

- A** Employees who test positive and are unable to work remotely should contact UHR OneSource to determine the appropriate type of leave, if eligible, to be taken.

Q *What happens if I have to be quarantined due to close contact with a positive case and can't report to work?*

- A** Employees who are quarantined because of close contact with a positive case, should contact UHR OneSource to determine the appropriate type of leave, if eligible, to be taken.

Q *If I test positive, is my immediate family eligible to be tested?*

- A** Testing through the Rutgers testing program is not available to family members. Family members should contact their health care providers so that they can be tested according to current guidelines. Testing can also be obtained at many pharmacies or NJDOH testing sites. Information on NJDOH testing sites can be found at: <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/testing> .

Q *If I test negative and then develop symptoms, how long should I wait to be retested?*

A If you are experiencing any symptoms, you must remain at home, notify your supervisor, and contact your personal health care provider for testing and treatment.

Q *How do I receive clearance to return to work or study?*

A Asymptomatic individuals who have tested positive as part of the Rutgers testing program will be informed by Occupational Health or Student Health when they may return to work or study.

Asymptomatic individuals who have tested positive from a privately obtained test should obtain a clearance letter from their physician.

Symptomatic individuals should obtain a clearance letter from their physician in order to be cleared to return to work. In the case of physician unavailability or office closures, a signed self-attestation of improvement in symptoms (consistent with CDC guidance on ending isolation after COVID-19 infection), may be made available through UHR OneSource and can suffice as return-to-campus documentation.