

NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Expands COVID-19 Testing to Pharmacies

Up to 60 Ontario Pharmacies to Offer Testing by Appointment Starting Friday

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[Office of the Premier](#)

HUNTSVILLE — The Ontario government is providing people with convenient and timely access to free COVID-19 testing at pharmacies in the province. As of Friday, up to 60 pharmacies in Ontario will begin offering testing by appointment only, with further locations coming online in the coming weeks. This initiative will expand testing capacity well beyond the province's 150 assessment centres.

Details were provided today by Premier Doug Ford and Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

"We rely on our pharmacists for our flu shots, prescriptions, and important health advice for ourselves and our families. It makes sense to engage them as key partners in delivering more COVID-19 testing," said Premier Ford. "I have to thank Shoppers Drug Mart, Rexall, and the independent pharmacies who have stepped up in a big way to help expand testing to more people in the province. With everyone pitching in, we are well on our way to reaching our goal of 50,000 tests a day and stopping the spread of COVID-19."

Pharmacies may choose to provide testing for Ontarians who have no COVID-19 symptoms. Individuals, within provincial testing guidance, will be able to visit select pharmacies by appointment only, and they will be pre-screened and then tested at no charge. When visiting a pharmacy Ontarians should continue to follow COVID-19 public health measures, including wearing a face covering, frequent handwashing, and maintaining physical distance from those outside their household or social circle.

"As part of our plan to ensure that we are ready for future waves of COVID-19, our government is working with pharmacies to help expand testing for Ontarians," said Minister Elliott. "With a recent increase in the number of cases, we are making sure

people have more options for testing to identify cases of COVID-19 early. We must not let our guard down. Our best defense is still to follow all public health measures like practising physical distancing, wearing face masks and staying home when ill, so we can stop the spread of COVID-19."

The expansion of COVID-19 testing to pharmacies is part of the province's comprehensive plan to prepare the health system for a second wave of COVID-19. *Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19* will help the province quickly identify, prevent and respond to any scenario in order to protect communities.

The *Keeping Ontarians Safe* plan will:

- Maintain strong public health measures, including continued expansion of testing and case and contact management;
- Quickly identify, manage and prevent COVID-19 outbreaks;
- Accelerate efforts to reduce health service backlogs;
- Prepare for surges in COVID-19 cases;
- Recruit, retain, train and support health care workers, while also continuing to engage families and caregivers; and
- Implement the largest flu immunization campaign in Ontario's history.

Given the size and complexity of the *Keeping Ontarians Safe* plan, the province will continue to release details over the coming days.

In addition, Women's College, Mount Sinai and University Health Network—Toronto Western Hospital assessment centres will be offering saliva testing this week. More assessment centres will offer this less invasive method in the coming weeks, giving Ontarians more options to access testing for COVID-19.