



Oregon K-12 Student Screening Testing Program FAQ

Overview

Q: What types of COVID-19 testing are there?

A: There are two types of testing for COVID-19. Diagnostic testing refers to testing of an individual with symptoms of COVID-19 or a recent exposure to a case of COVID-19. Screening testing refers to testing of an individual without symptoms or known exposure to COVID-19.

Q: What is the K-12 Student Screening Testing Program?

A: The K-12 Student Screening Testing Program offers all of Oregon's schools, public and private, free, weekly testing for COVID-19 during the 2021-2022 academic school year. Screening testing targets unvaccinated students, however, schools are not required to verify the vaccination status of participating students.

Weekly testing for COVID-19 will help identify COVID-19 infections early, and keep students in school. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) recommend that all schools implement COVID-19 screening testing.

Participation in this program is voluntary, and schools and families can opt-out at any time. This program is separate from the existing diagnostic [COVID-19 Testing in Oregon's K-12 Schools program](#) which uses Abbott BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests.

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Q: Who is eligible to participate in this program?

A: Because COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in reducing the risk of infection, OHA recommends screening unvaccinated individuals. Your school may choose to verify vaccination status of students, but this is not required to participate. Students who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days should be excluded from the screening program.

This program is open to all Oregon K-12 schools, public or private. The program is not open to early learning or pre-K programs.

Q: Does this program cost any money to the school, staff, or families?

A: No. This program is fully funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Q: How is this program different from the Diagnostic K-12 Testing Program? Can I participate in both programs?

A: OHA and ODE strongly encourage all schools to participate in the diagnostic [COVID-19 Testing in Oregon's K-12 Schools](#) program which uses Abbott BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests.

[Diagnostic testing](#) is the testing of students or staff who develop symptoms at school or are exposed to COVID-19 in a school setting. For some students, this COVID-19 testing in K-12 schools may represent their only access to a COVID-19 test and the importance of this access cannot be overstated. This testing may be used to shorten the length of quarantine for exposed individuals who test negative if this is recommended by the local public health authority.

Q: What is the school's role in this program?

A: Educational partners will need to determine who they want to test (e.g., cohorts, extracurriculars, or both) and will need to gather consent from parents/guardians. Schools will also need to provide rosters of participating students to laboratories to help make sure the correct sample goes to the correct student.

Q: How long does it take for testing to start?

A: Due to the size and scope of this project, it may take a few weeks to enroll a school district and its students into the program.

Q: Can I use the BinaxNOW test for this program?

A: No. The BinaxNOW testing is solely to be used for K-12 students or staff who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day or who have had exposure to COVID-19 while at school.

Testing operations

Q: What type of COVID-19 test is this?

A: The K-12 student screening program utilizes molecular (e.g., PCR) tests to detect SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Q: How does this program work?

A: Participating schools will be assigned to a regional laboratory partner, based on geography. Schools will have the option to offer weekly screening to either classroom cohorts (e.g., a second-grade classroom), extracurricular cohorts (e.g., a chess club or football team), or both; schools will have flexibility and choice in program design.

Q: How are specimens collected for testing?

A: Students will either self-swab using a shallow nasal swab or provide a saliva sample by spitting into a cup. An adult (e.g., parent, teacher, school administrator) will need to monitor the self-collection process and ensure that specimens are labeled and packaged correctly for shipping or courier pick-up. Regional laboratories will provide specific training to schools.

Q: Can the specimen be collected at home?

A: Schools may choose to work with their assigned regional laboratory to allow test collection kits to be sent home with the student for parents/guardians to assist with collection. The kits would then need to be returned to the school the following day to be shipped to the laboratory.

Q: If a lab allows for specimen to be collected at home, is the testing kit safe to handle after testing?

A: Yes, the screening kit is safe to transport after collection.

Q: Does a nasal swab hurt?

A: This program uses a shallow nasal swab. The nasal swab might tickle or feel a little uncomfortable, but it should not hurt.

Q: Who are the regional laboratory partners?

A: Regional laboratory partners are assigned by county.

County	Regional Laboratory Partner	Contact Information
Baker, Clatsop, Clackamas, Columbia, Gilliam, Hood River, Malheur, Morrow, Multnomah, Sherman, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, Washington	Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)	Dale Weydert, (he/him) Project Manager weydert@ohsu.edu
Benton, Linn, Lincoln, Polk, Marion, Yamhill	Santiam Hospital or Willamette Valley Toxicology	Aslan Noakes(WVT) noakes@wvtlab.com Darrell Mooers (Santiam) dmooers@santiamhospital.org

Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Lane	University of Oregon (UO)	Grace Godfrey C19Schoolsupport@uoregon.edu
Crook, Deschutes, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Wheeler	Sky Lakes Medical Center	Jennifer Fogarty MT(ASCP) jfogarty@skylakes.org (541) 274-4090 Meredith B. Case, MLS(ASCP) ^{CM} 541-274-4001 meredith.case@skylakes.org

Q: How long does it take to collect specimens at school?

A: This will depend on the number of students being tested. When organized in advance, the disruption to classroom time should be minimal.

Q: How does my school or school district sign up for this program?

A: Schools and/or school districts can enroll by completing this [form](#).

Q: What are the next steps after I register?

A: Once a school is registered, school information will be shared with the assigned regional laboratory who will reach out with the next steps.

Testing results

Q: When and how will I be notified of the results?

A: Parents/guardians will receive test results directly from their regional laboratory partner. Parents/guardians should receive results within 24-36 hours from the time the test arrives at the laboratory.

Q: Will test results be shared with my school?

A: Test results will not be shared directly with schools. Local public health may contact the school to investigate positive cases. Public health only releases identifiable information regarding cases when absolutely necessary.

Q: What if a student tests positive for COVID-19?

A: If a student tests positive, that student should follow the advice and guidance of the local public health authority, including staying at home for 10 days of isolation.

All test results will be shared with parent/guardians and the local public health authority, who will assist with contact tracing & case investigation. OHA strongly advises that schools adhere to school exclusion processes as laid out in [Communicable Disease Guidance for Schools](#).

Q: Will consent be required?

A: Schools must collect consent from parents/guardians before testing can take place. Minors between the ages of 15-17 may provide direct consent to testing under ORS 109.640(2)(a).

A sample consent form can be found on the [OHA School Testing Website](#), under resources. Consent only needs to be collected once for the 2021-2022 academic school year.

Q: Is testing mandatory?

A: No. Schools must opt in to participate in the program.

Q: Can schools mandate testing for students who are unvaccinated?

A: This may be considered at the local level, in consultation with a school's legal counsel.

Q: Can this be used to help clear a student if they had a known COVID-19 exposure?

A: The diagnostic [COVID-19 Testing in Oregon's K-12 Schools](#) may be used to shorten the length of quarantine for exposed individuals who test negative if this is recommended by the local public health authority.

Document accessibility: For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the Health Information Center at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsosha.state.or.us.