

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test Kits Update

As previously communicated in [Alberta Blue Cross® benefact 1144](#), issued November 2023, all Albertans can get free COVID-19 rapid antigen testing kits for at-home use from participating pharmacies across the province. Pharmacies are encouraged to consider stocking these test kits to support patients and their families who are looking to test for COVID-19 infection.

Please see [Alberta Blue Cross benefact 1180](#), issued June 2024, for additional information regarding the use of rapid antigen testing kits to help patients and clinicians determine eligibility for Paxlovid under government-sponsored drug plans. Pharmacy teams should discuss how to best help patients access Paxlovid—it may be helpful to keep Paxlovid in stock to prevent delays and ensure patients have access to this medication in a timely manner.

COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits are available to order from pharmacy wholesale distributors. While federal supply remains available, we would like to remind pharmacies to check both their primary and secondary wholesalers when placing orders for the federal supply in the event your primary wholesaler does not have stock. **Note: costs associated with the distribution of COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits from wholesalers are reimbursed by Alberta Health.**

Alberta has secured additional federal supply of free COVID-19 rapid antigen tests; this supply consists of several different brands of tests. These brands are authorized by Health Canada. Incoming supply includes COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits manufactured by BTNX, Roche, Abbott Panbio and Artron. **Please note, each brand has a different expiry month (see the table below for more details).**

Product name	Tests per kit	Expiry month
BTNX Rapid Response COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test Cassette	5	September 2024
Roche SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Self-Test Nasal	5	October 2024
Panbio COVID-19 Antigen Self-Test	10	October 2024
Artron COVID-19 Antigen Test	5	December 2024

Similar to the COVID-19 rapid antigen tests manufactured by BTNX, please be advised that the Roche, Artron and Panbio COVID-19 rapid antigen tests also use lateral flow immunoassay technology to detect specific proteins associated with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) using a nasal swab that can be self-administered.

Like BTNX, the above noted manufacturers' COVID-19 rapid antigen tests are designed for ease of use, often requiring minimal training for administration and interpretation of results. Additionally, these tests are suitable for self-use as well as for other point-of-care testing settings in the community. Pharmacists are encouraged to advise individuals to carefully follow the manufacturer instructions in conducting a rapid antigen test. An optimal specimen for performing a rapid antigen test involves using the included swab to rub the insides of the cheeks on both sides, the back of the throat on both sides (the tonsil area) and then both nostrils.

Please note, expired test kits should not be returned to the distributor or manufacturer.

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Data elements for direct bill claiming

Pharmacy team members can submit a claim for \$60 per case to Alberta Blue Cross for each case of test kits they order and receive from their pharmacy wholesale distributor (McKesson, Imperial, Kohl & Frisch or Matrix SDM).

- Carrier code: 16
- Group number: 23464, section 000
- Pharmacy license number
- Pharmacist license number
- Client number: pseudo-PHN CV00000000
- Client’s full name: use “Rapid” for first name and “Test” for last name
- Client’s date of birth: use any combination of numbers that satisfy the format YYYYMMDD
- Client’s gender: use F or M
- Relationship code: enter zero (0) if needed
- Prescriber ID number: pharmacist license number
- Prescriber reference code: 86
- Quantity: 1 (only one case may be claimed at a time)
- Service date: date case is received
- Drug cost: \$0.00
- Dispensing fee: \$60.00 per case
- PIN: 00071130
- Special Service Code (SSC): L

Free ancillary supplies update—not available after August 30, 2024

The availability of free ancillary supplies to support the COVID immunization program in pharmacies will stop on **August 30, 2024**. Please refer to the below list of supplies available to order through your pharmacy wholesale distributor until August 30, 2024. These supplies are available at no cost and pharmacies are encouraged to order enough supplies to support their needs for the fall immunization program.

NEEDLE HYPODERMIC SAFETY 25GA X 5/8 IN	BOX OF 100
NEEDLE HYPODERMIC SAFETY 23GA X 1.25 IN	BOX OF 100
SYRINGE LUER LOCK TIP 1ML LOW DEAD SPACE	EACH
NEEDLE HYPODERMIC HINGED SAFETY 25GA X 1 INCH LOW DEAD SPACE	EACH
CONTAINER SHARPS SLIDING LID YELLOW 22.7L	KIT
NEEDLE HYPODERMIC SAFETY LOW DEAD SPACE 25GA X 1.5 IN	EACH
NEEDLE HYPODERMIC SAFETY LOW DEAD SPACE 25GA X 5/8 IN	EACH
PAD ALCOHOL 70% ISOPROPYL MEDIUM 30X65MM LORIS	BOX OF 200
CONTAINER SHARPS YELLOW 34L SLIDE TOP PHAC	KT
CONTAINER SHARPS 11L COUNTER-BALANCED DOOR HORIZONTAL DROP TRANSPARENT YELLOW PHAC	KT
Syringe 1ML with Needle safety 25GA x 1 IN Low Dead Space	EACH
Syringe Safety Wealy 1ML with Needle 25GA x 1 IN Low Dead Space	EACH
Syringe Safety Vanishpoint 1ML with Needle 25GA x 1 IN	EACH

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Use of Health.imm and Health.AVI emails

To streamline stakeholder communication, Alberta Health is requesting your assistance by reviewing the changes below and updating your contact lists as applicable.

Health.Imm@gov.ab.ca: all program- and policy-related questions or concerns should be directed to this inbox. This includes questions regarding administration of provincially funded vaccine, cold chain, expiry extensions, vaccine allocations, COVID and influenza questions, product issues and vaccine storage.

AVIsupport@stchome.com: AVI help desk questions should be directed to this inbox, including questions related to login processes, reconciling vaccine inventory, creating or receiving orders and receiving transfers.

Health.AVI@gov.ab.ca: Alberta Health AVI questions should be directed to this inbox. This includes compliance program questions, registration in AVI and reconciliation correction assistance.

For assistance with benefit or claim inquiries, please contact an Alberta Blue Cross Pharmacy Services Provider Relations contact centre representative at

780-498-8370 (Edmonton and area)

403-294-4041 (Calgary and area)

1-800-361-9632 (toll free)

FAX 780-498-8406 (Edmonton and area)

FAX 1-877-305-9911 (toll free)

Alberta Blue Cross offers online access to current Pharmacy Benefacts and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims.

Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

