

COVID Testing Options and Information:

We are having conversations everyday with families and there is some confusion around testing and identifying COVID symptoms. In an effort to help make everything more clear, we have some information and suggestions to share. Please review, make plans and know what you will do when your child is not feeling well so you are prepared. All of this information applies to anyone in your household experiencing symptoms of COVID.

Types of tests:

- PCR - used for symptomatic or asymptomatic people - results are usually back within 48 hours
- Rapid Antigen - used only for asymptomatic people - results are usually back within 15-30 minutes.

Which test do I need?

- If your child has symptoms of COVID or has been identified as a close contact, a PCR test must be done
- A rapid test can be done as a quick confirmation of positive COVID result or for required testing for asymptomatic people (for example, testing required for international travel or to attend certain venues).
- Please note: A PCR test is more reliable than a rapid test. Rapid tests are known to produce false negatives, however, if a rapid test is positive, it has almost always been backed up as positive by a PCR test.

How do I get a PCR test?

- **Call your physician and see what options they suggest.** Ask them to give you a referral to the drive up at 1300 Michigan. Sometimes it takes time to get in to see a doctor. If that is true for you, use one of the other options listed in this section.
- **Spectrum Health drive up at 1300 Michigan** - This requires a referral from your doctor or you can set up an on demand visit through MyChart. Results from the 1300 Michigan site are often within 30 hours of taking the test. [You can find details about Spectrum Health's testing process here.](#) *As of 10/7/2021 Spectrum is only providing referrals for symptomatic people. Please check into other options if you are looking for a test and are asymptomatic.
- **Kent County Health Department** - There are links to several locations. The NxGenMdx has results within 24 hours as of 11/3/2021. [Here is the link.](#)
- **Testing for Kent County school staff and students** is now available at several school locations in Kent County. This testing is available to staff and students ONLY who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Step 1: Schedule your appointment here: [COVID testing site scheduler](#) (you are welcome to sign up at the most convenient location through this scheduler).
 - Step 2: Complete the registration paperwork for your appointment [using this link.](#)

- **Mercy Health** - this does not require a referral and can be [scheduled online at this website](#). Insurance should cover the cost but you will want to check into that before the test.
- **Another option is to visit an Urgent Care.** You may have to pay the copay for urgent care and the results can be as fast as a few hours to 48 hours depending on where you go. Many families have received results within hours when they visit **AFC Urgent Care at 1740 28th St SE. Call 616-323-3999** to make an appointment.
- **We do not recommend getting a PCR test at Rite Aid or Walgreens** as the results have been taking a full 7 days to be returned to parents.
- These and other options are available at the [Kent County Health Department website](#) and at [michigan.gov](#).

How do I get a Rapid Antigen Test?

- A rapid antigen test that you can do at home are available for purchase at Walgreens, Rite Aid and Meijer stores. Supply can be limited.
- [Neighborhood Pop Up Sites](#) - search by Kent County to see available locations and times

What are the symptoms that require an alternative diagnosis or a COVID test?

- **All of the following are symptoms of COVID:** Fever over 100.5, chills, headache, extreme tiredness/fatigue, sore throat, new congestion or runny nose, body aches, nausea/vomiting or diarrhea, new cough, loss of taste or smell, shortness of breath
- If anyone in your household has one of these symptoms, please see the level 1 and level 2 descriptions below to determine your next step.
- Level 1: An alternative diagnosis or a COVID test is needed if you or your child has **ONE** of the following symptoms
 - New cough
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Shortness of breath
- Level 2: An alternative diagnosis or a COVID test is needed if you or your child has any combination of **TWO** of the symptoms below;
 - Fever over 100.5
 - Chills
 - Headache
 - Extreme tiredness/fatigue
 - Sore throat
 - New congestions or runny nose
 - Body aches
 - Nausea/vomiting or diarrhea
- In our experience so far at GRCDC a prominent symptom for children is a headache.
- If your student experiences one symptom from level 1 above, you must seek a healthcare evaluation.

- If your student has only one symptom from level 2 above, they do not need to seek a healthcare evaluation, however, you may want to keep them home to make sure no other symptoms develop.

Please remember:

Do not send students to school if a sibling or other household member has symptoms that indicate an alternative diagnosis or COVID test is needed (as described above). Do not send students to school while a household member is waiting for COVID test results. You should also not participate in playdates, go to crowded events or participate in other types of get togethers while symptomatic or waiting for test results.