



Clinician alert #77 – all clinicians

Effective from 11 January 2022

New information

- Rapid antigen test (RAT) kits are now permitted for use in Western Australia (WA).
- The prohibition on the use of RATs in WA has been lifted to allow time for the distribution of RAT kits in WA and to allow purchase of RAT kits by industry and the community before border restrictions are relaxed.

Rapid antigen tests

- PCR tests remain the gold standard for confirming a COVID-19 diagnosis and should be used to test anyone with symptoms of COVID-19.
- RATs will complement but not replace PCR testing.
- Currently, anyone who returns a positive RAT result must immediately seek a diagnostic COVID-19 PCR test and isolate until a negative PCR result is received.

Which tests should I use?

- RAT kits approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration can be used. Instructions for use of individual test kits will vary including by sample type (e.g. nasal swab, saliva). A list of approved kits can be found at <https://www.tga.gov.au/covid-19-rapid-antigen-self-tests-are-approved-australia>

When should a RAT test kit be used?

- A RAT is most accurate in a setting of widespread community transmission and provides limited value (and may be inaccurate) when community transmission is low.
- RAT tests are not recommended for use in WA now when there is low or no community transmission of COVID-19.
- PCR currently remains the preferred test for persons with symptoms compatible with COVID-19.

Where can I buy a RAT kit?

- RAT kits will be available for purchase at supermarkets, pharmacies and other retailers.
- The Commonwealth government will provide a limited number of free RAT kits to concession card holders which will be accessible at local pharmacies in the next few weeks.
- If RAT testing is required under a Public Health Direction, a test kit will be provided free of charge. This includes any RAT testing required by close contacts of a confirmed case.

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DEPUTY INCIDENT CONTROLLER

STATE HEALTH INCIDENT COORDINATION CENTRE