

Targeted asymptomatic COVID-19 testing

Alberta Health has announced an update to COVID-19 testing recommendations for Albertans.

Processes and operations at the pharmacies conducting asymptomatic COVID-19 testing will not change as a result of this announcement.

In an effort to reduce wait times, to speed up access to results and to support Albertans during respiratory virus and influenza season, testing in Alberta will shift to focus on those with symptoms, coupled with asymptomatic testing for only those in the risk groups outlined below. Asymptomatic testing is no longer being recommended for Albertans who don't fall into these risk groups.

This means that, effective today, COVID-19 testing in Alberta is recommended for the following:

- Albertans with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Albertans who are close contacts of a confirmed case, whether symptomatic or not.
- Albertans who are linked to a known outbreak, whether symptomatic or not.
- Asymptomatic Albertans who are
 - o school teachers and/or school staff,
 - o healthcare workers,
 - o staff and/or residents at congregate living facilities, including long-term care,
 - o experiencing homelessness, or
 - o require asymptomatic testing for the purpose of travel.

Voluntary asymptomatic testing is not recommended for Albertans who are not in the target groups; however, Albertans will be asked to operate on the honour system.

All Albertans are asked to please follow these new recommendations to ensure that testing capacity remains here for those who need it most.

Pharmacies conducting asymptomatic COVID-19 testing are encouraged to inform patients about new testing recommendations, but are not required to identify or assess need based on the target groups for anyone presenting for testing.

... continued from previous page

For clarity, at this time, an Albertan should not be denied testing if they are not within the target groups and still request to have an asymptomatic COVID-19 test conducted.

The target populations continue to represent significant volumes of asymptomatic testing and we continue to rely on partnering pharmacies.

The updated approach will be phased in over the next few days. Any Albertan with a test already booked will receive it. The Government of Alberta will continue to monitor the spread of the virus and add new high-priority groups if needed.

When you have questions:

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 Benefits and supplemental claiming information to assist with the submission of your direct bill drug claims. Visit ab.bluecross.ca/providers/pharmacy-home.php

