

COVID-19 TESTS AVAILABLE TO IDAHO SCHOOLS



- **Testing continues to be vital to protect our schools from COVID-19**
- **The CDC recommends screening teachers and staff at least once per week, as well as all symptomatic people and their close contacts**
- **Multiple testing options are available, and DPH is here to help (see below for contacts)**

Idaho Coronavirus on the Rise Again

Idaho is seeing new cases of Coronavirus increase as the 7-day average continues to rise. Variants of concern are spreading in Idaho and are believed to be significantly more transmissible. Students and staff returning from spring break may have a higher likelihood of having been exposed; testing can identify cases early and help to protect their community and their loved ones.

As Idaho moves toward a return to full in-person learning, testing for coronavirus will provide vital protection for teachers, staff, and students, and may help prevent outbreaks, help protect the community and keep our schools open. Idaho's vaccine rollout will take several months to complete and is only approved for individuals 16 years or older. It is critical to continue to protect ourselves, protect others and protect our communities. Wear a mask, maintain physical distancing, wash your hands, stay home if you are sick, and get tested regularly.

Testing Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 in schools

Screening, or serial testing, helps identify people with COVID-19 and prevent 'silent spread' of the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends screening testing of teachers and staff at least once per week, depending on community transmission levels. Symptomatic students, teachers, staff, and their close contacts are strongly encouraged to seek testing. Schools may also consider testing 10% or more of their students, teachers, and staff at random on a weekly basis or conducting pooled PCR testing of small cohorts.

The Idaho Division of Public Health (DPH) encourages the use of both PCR and antigen tests for screening purposes. Different test types are available including onsite and offsite testing. Used effectively, these strategies can help catch outbreaks early and protect our families. The CDC's full guidance on schools testing can be found here (updated Feb 26th, 2021):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html#testing>

What support is available from DPH to deliver testing?

1. DPH can supply Abbott BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests free of charge to schools meeting use requirements including: an ordering provider, CLIA certificate of waiver and results reporting.
2. DPH can supply VAULT PCR tests free of charge to schools meeting use requirements including training, observation of testing, and use of a phone app for registration and reporting.
3. DPH can provide supplies for PCR sample collection for use with participating laboratories.
4. DPH can process applications for CLIA waivers, training staff on testing and logistics.

Who should you contact at DPH if you would like support?

For more information, please contact Sonja Schriever at Sonja.Schriever@dhw.idaho.gov, or Dr. Christopher Ball at Christopher.Ball@dhw.idaho.gov.

TESTING OPTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

ON SITE:

1. **PCR testing:** Requires sample collection equipment and training; partnership with a lab for analysis.
2. **Rapid antigen serial screening using BinaxNOW:** Requires an ordering provider, CLIA certificate of waiver and results reporting; with follow up PCR tests for asymptomatic positives or symptomatic negatives.

OFF SITE:

1. **Albertsons:** Free testing for teachers, staff and students with a voucher code (available through the school or local public health district).
2. **Partnership with other local pharmacies.**
3. **Medical Provider offices.**
4. **Other testing options including Crush the Curve and community testing sites.**

