

City of New Bedford announces second round of FREE at-home COVID-19 test kit distribution

City again partnering with community organizations to target vulnerable clients; Public libraries will also serve as distribution locations.

City health and emergency management officials are coordinating with community organizations to distribute free, at-home COVID-19 test kits this week.

In December 2021, the City successfully distributed nearly 38,000 kits (each containing 2 tests) through community organizations using a similar distribution strategy. The current plan will distribute up to 20,000 at-home COVID-19 testing kits, with each kit containing one “Floflex” antigen test.

With school vacation week and the Easter holiday approaching, and increased travel anticipated, the City is again focusing on local sub-populations that are the least vaccinated and therefore most at risk for illness, as well as sub-populations that have seen disproportionately high case rates.

Priorities include:

- Families with young children
- The unvaccinated
- Those living in congregate housing settings
- People who identify as Hispanic, multi-racial, or as another minority racial/ethnic group

You must be a New Bedford resident to receive test kits.

Supplies are limited and may affect availability. Each person may request up to 5 kits.

Parents with vulnerable children are encouraged to obtain kits even if there is no immediate exposure risk or active case in their household. Likewise, even as overall COVID-19 transmission levels remain modest, small business owners (provided they are residents) may wish to consider obtaining kits to help protect vulnerable employees in the event of a future workplace exposure.

LIBRARIES

The distribution plan includes a limited number of “pop-up” distribution events at public libraries, as follows:

- Downtown / Main Library (613 Pleasant St.); 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (April 12, 13, 14)
- Wilks Branch Library (1911 Acushnet Ave.); 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday (April 12) and Thursday (April 14); and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday (April 13)
- Howland-Green Branch (3 Rodney French Blvd.); 12 p.m. to 8 p.m., Tuesday (April 12) and Thursday (April 14); and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday (April 13)

BACKGROUND ON TEST KITS

Residents use the tests at home. Test results are available in minutes and samples do not need to go to a laboratory. People do not need a cell phone or computer for any part of the test. The tests are effective for all individuals 2 years of age and up, regardless of vaccination status or whether they have symptoms. There is no mechanism with the at-home tests to report results and test results do not need to be reported to public health authorities.

If you test negative, continue to monitor yourself for indications of infection. If you develop symptoms or existing symptoms worsen, take another home test or seek a PCR test at

a testing location:
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test>.

If you test positive, you should consider confirming your result with a PCR test at a testing location (see link above), isolate consistent with CDC guidelines, and notify any close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19.

For more information, visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/self-testing.html/>