

Media Release

The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP

Leader of the House

Minister for Health

Minister for Health Infrastructure

Minister for Medical Research



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MORE FREE RATs NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL

The Andrews Labor Government is making sure more Victorians can access rapid antigen tests (RATs) free of charge through their local council.

Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas today announced all Victorians are eligible to pick up two free packets of RATs through their local council to help with early detection and treatment of COVID-19.

The council RAT distribution program is currently operating across more than 200 local sites, such as libraries and council customer service centres. The program is now open to all Victorians with all eligibility requirements now removed.

Individuals can collect up to two packets for themselves plus up to two packets for each household member per visit while people with a disability or their carer can collect up to four packets of tests.

RATs are the primary tool for early detection of COVID-19 and to enable timely clinical care, including access to antivirals for those eligible. More than 125 million free RATs were distributed to Victorians last year.

Individuals at high risk of severe illness and eligible for antivirals are encouraged to see their GP to arrange a plan in the event they have COVID-19 symptoms. People in this category who are symptomatic and test negative on a RAT should contact a GP or GP respiratory clinic to access PCR testing for early detection and effective treatment.

To find out if their local council is participating and check the collection sites in their neighbourhood Victorians can visit: coronavirus.vic.gov.au/get-a-covid-19-test

For simple tips on staying ahead of COVID-19 and staying well this summer, visit: coronavirus.vic.gov.au/health-advice

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Mary-Anne Thomas

"All Victorians can now pick up two free packets of rapid antigen tests to ensure they can enjoy their summer safely with their loved ones."

"There are simple things people can do to enjoy the summer safely – take a test if you have symptoms, stay home if you're sick, wear a high-quality mask if you can't physically distance, talk to your GP to see if you're eligible for antivirals and stay up to date with your vaccinations."

Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne

"We've partnered with local councils across Victoria to make sure all Victorians can pick up free RATs at more than 200 sites and keep safe this summer."

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