

What does testing for Covid-19 entail?

Singapore is expanding its testing capacity to improve its ability to control the spread of the virus as the economy gradually reopens. **Cheryl Tan** reports.

WHERE TESTING IS DONE

- Mass testing has been conducted at foreign worker dormitories and at some polytechnics for pre-school staff.
- At hospitals, and at 196 polyclinics and general practitioner clinics.
- Four regional screening centres at Old Police Academy, The Float @ Marina Bay, Bukit Gombak Sports Hall and Bishan Sports Hall.
- A fifth centre will open later at 2 Bedok North Street 2, a former sepak takraw sports hall.

Groups tested so far include:

- Staff and residents of senior homes
- Pre-school workers
- Essential workers including front-line officers and healthcare workers
- Migrant workers in foreign worker dormitories, some of whom are in essential sectors
- People diagnosed with acute respiratory infection when they visit the doctor, with priority given to:
 - Seniors above 65 years old
 - Healthcare workers
 - Staff from educational institutions and students who are aged 13 and older.



Essential workers being screened for Covid-19 at the regional screening centre at The Float @ Marina Bay.

WHAT IS THE TEST

The polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test looks for Covid-19 genetic sequences which indicate if a person is infected.

What to expect during a PCR test

- The swab test is free of charge and will take 3 to 4 minutes.
- Most laboratories can give the results on the same day.
- Take along your ID card as multiple checks are likely to be conducted to ensure that the swab test is conducted on the right person.

How the PCR test is done

- Samples are taken from the nasopharynx (the back of the nose)

or from the oropharynx (the back of the throat). The back of the nose is often the preferred sample source as it has the highest viral load among Covid-19 patients.

- A nasal swab will not be conducted if you have had any nose bleed, surgery or injury recently.

Nose swab

- Tissue paper will be provided. Blow your nose to clear all mucus. Once you are done, throw the tissue paper into the trash bin for biohazard waste.
- Lean your head backwards, and lift your chin.
- A cotton swab will be placed in each of your nostrils, all the way to the back of the nose for two to three seconds each. Remember to stay still. You may tear or feel slightly uncomfortable.
- Raise your hand if you experience any pain or discomfort.
- Once the swab is finished, the sample is placed in a biohazard bag labelled with your name.



Oral swab

- Tilt your head backwards, open your mouth wide and say "ah".
- A cotton swab will be placed down your throat, for around 2-3 seconds. Remember to stay still. It may feel ticklish or slightly uncomfortable.
- Raise your hand if you experience any pain or discomfort.
- Once the swab is finished, the sample is placed in a biohazard bag labelled with your name.

How a swab test is done



SCAN TO WATCH



<https://str.sg/gleneagles>