COVID-19 Monitoring & Testing Backgrounder

Saskatchewan is enhancing COVID-19 monitoring and testing services for all residents.

Plans include targeted monitoring and testing options for students, teachers and school staff, to prepare for the reopening of Saskatchewan schools in September.

Provincial Testing & Monitoring

COVID-19 testing capacity in Saskatchewan will increase. We are working towards **daily capacity of 4,000 tests** in early September.

Universal testing is available in Saskatchewan. Anyone can be tested, even if they don't have symptoms. Testing locations are established in communities throughout the province.

Regina and Saskatoon will introduce **drive-thru testing sites**, where people do not need a referral. They only need to show their health card. This service may expand to other communities in the future, creating greater access and flexibility in testing services.

Testing in Schools

In school settings, monitoring and testing will increase to proactively safeguard the wellness of students, teachers and school staff. The strategy is based on **informed consent**, **parental choice** and transparent **information sharing**. Measures include:

- **targeted testing** across school divisions;
- **priority testing** for teachers and school staff; and
- Innovative approaches to **collecting and reporting COVID-19 data**.

All parents will receive detailed instructions for steps to take if a child tests positive:
  - How to self-isolate;
  - How other classmates, teachers and staff are informed and take precautions;
  - Instructions for siblings and family members and what they should do; and
  - How a classroom and school will respond if several cases are identified.

Teachers and staff will have priority for testing.
Teachers and school staff are encouraged to be tested before returning to school and frequently during the school year. Local Medical Health Officers can provide advice to teachers and school staff on the frequency of testing.

August 2020

Targeted Monitoring in Schools

Students in divisions across the province will have the option of participating in **voluntary testing** in schools with parental consent.

Participating schools will be selected based on factors such as population density and specific grade levels. If communities experience a surge in infection rates, schools in those communities will be prioritized for testing.

A testing innovation committee will be established in Saskatchewan. This committee will be tasked with reviewing evidence on cutting edge testing options that are less invasive, which may be more comfortable for children.

In-school public health visits for routine childhood vaccinations will include COVID-19 testing, with parental consent.

Information and Resources

Parents will receive detailed instructions to help them understand testing options inside and outside of school settings. Information will indicate when and where testing will take place, how results will be received and how to follow-up or find resources in the event of a positive test result.

Public health officials will work with schools and parents to educate students about testing for COVID-19 and infection prevention.

Proactive measures – enhanced monitoring, flexible universal testing options, and focused efforts in schools – will help protect our children, teachers, school staff and all residents from COVID-19.

For more information, visit www.saskatchewan.ca or contact your local school division.

Saskatchewan