

Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) are being offered in South Australia to truck drivers who have not been fully vaccinated or do not have evidence of a negative COVID-19 result taken within 72 hours of arrival in South Australia.

In addition to the standard COVID-19 test, you may be asked to undertake a Rapid Antigen Test. These tests have been implemented at some South Australian border sites because they are easy to perform and provide a rapid result.



What does the rapid antigen test involve?

A health worker will collect a specimen for the Rapid Antigen Test in addition to the standard PCR collection. The Rapid Antigen Test is performed as soon as possible after collection and a result should be available within 20 minutes. If the testing site is busy, the Rapid Antigen Test may be processed in batches after you have left the truck stop. You will generally receive the Rapid Antigen Test result by SMS within 2 hours.



Why am I getting two swabs taken?

Although Rapid Antigen Tests provide a rapid result, there is a risk of false positive and false negative results, and therefore cannot be used as the sole diagnosis of COVID-19 infection. PCR testing is the gold standard and is still required to confirm a Rapid Antigen Test result. Unfortunately, the one swab cannot be used in both tests.



What happens if my Rapid Antigen Test result is negative?

You will receive an SMS on confirmation of the negative Rapid Antigen Test result. A negative Rapid Antigen Test result does not exclude COVID-19 infection. The standard PCR test will be performed on the second swab in SA Pathology's Adelaide Laboratory. You can expect a negative SMS result for this definitive PCR test within 24 hours. You must still maintain distancing and wear a face mask.

If you have any symptoms you must have a PCR test for COVID-19 (not a Rapid Antigen Test) and must self-isolate while you await the result.



What happens if I don't receive a text message about my Rapid Antigen Test?

If you do not receive an SMS about your Rapid Antigen Test within six hours this may indicate a problem with the test or the text messaging system; in this case you will only receive a result from your PCR test, usually within 24 hours.



What happens if my result is positive?

You will be contacted by the Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB) if your Rapid Antigen Test result is positive. The CDCB will advise you to self-isolate and provide further direction.

A positive Rapid Antigen Test result must be confirmed by the "gold standard" PCR test as some positive results may turn out to be false positives. Do not communicate to others that you are COVID-19 positive until confirmed by a PCR test. Your PCR swab, which was collected along with your Rapid Antigen Test swab, will be sent to a local SA Pathology Laboratory and tested urgently. We aim to provide this PCR result within 3 hours at which time you will again be contacted by a CDCB officer.