

COVID-19 Swish and Gargle Test for Children

The COVID-19 swish and gargle test method may be offered for children aged 4-11 who are anxious or are unwilling to take the nasopharyngeal swab test. For children under 4, or for those not able to follow the swish, gargle and spit instructions, the nose and throat swab may be offered. Either of these tests will accurately tell you if your child has COVID-19.

With the COVID-19 swish and gargle test, children ages 4-11 can simply swish, gargle and spit some sterile salt water or saline solution into a tube instead of getting a nasopharyngeal swab. The swish and gargle or saline rinse test is easy to do, but your child should practice before going to the testing assessment center.

Before you go:

- Help your child practice **at least one hour** before taking the test. Practicing could affect test results
- Tell child not to swallow the salty water or talk when they practice

How to make a saline solution and take a practice test:

-  Gather supplies for making a saline solution:
 - 1 cup (240 ml) of warm water
 - ½ teaspoon (2.5 ml) of household table salt
-  Mix salt in the water until it is fully dissolved
-  Let homemade saline cool to room temperature
-  Tell your child it will taste salty like ocean water and not to swallow, talk or spit it out
-  Ask your child to open their mouth wide
-  Give 1 tsp (5 ml) of cooled saline to your child
-  Swish. Gargle. Swish. Gargle. Swish. Gargle. Spit.

IMPORTANT!

Children should not eat, drink (even water), chew gum, or brush teeth for **at least one hour** before the swish and gargle saline rinse test. This might affect the amount of virus that is in their mouth, which can affect the results of the test.

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Additional Information

Disinfection

If your child spits out the salty liquid in the car following the test, make sure to properly clean your vehicle as there may be COVID-19 virus particles:

- Wash your hands before and after cleaning
- If possible, wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be thrown away after cleaning
- A disinfectant wipe is not suitable for cleaning fabric. Use the recommended COVID-19 cleaning solutions
- Spray the solution onto the cleaning cloth and wipe down any hard surfaces. Throw the cloth in the garbage
- Spray cleaner on cloth and rub thoroughly across all the upholstery. Throw the cloth in the garbage
- Let seat dry before using

Self-isolate

Children who are symptomatic with 2 or more symptoms or have been identified by Public Health will need to self-isolate after their test. This means they should go directly home after their test. Children who are required to self-isolate should stay home from school and not see visitors. Learn more about [self-isolating after a test](#).

Children can stop isolating and return to school if they get a negative test and they are feeling well – unless they have been asked by Public Health to continue to self-isolate. This might happen if a child has been exposed to someone with COVID-19. If a child tests positive, Public Health will provide instructions on when they can end isolation.

Accessing and understanding test results

At the testing assessment center, you will be provided an access code. Register your child for a [MyHealthNB](#) account using the access code. Your child's result should appear within 48 hours after taking the test. If you are unable to register your child for MyHealthNB, someone from Service New Brunswick will call you within 72 hours with the result.