

Newburyport Pool Testing Frequently Asked Questions
from your School Nurses
March 10, 2021

1. Is the test the one that goes high in the nose and burns?

- a. **No.** The test is performed low in the nose, the swab only touches the lower part of the nostrils, and it does not hurt.

2. What are the benefits of pool testing?

- a. "Pool testing offers advantages over individual testing for screening groups of people where the need for tests is high (keeping schools open) but the rate of infection in the population is relatively low," said [Dr. Peter Kotanko](#), research director at Renal Research Institute, a division of Fresenius Medical Care North America.

3. Will my child miss class to participate in pool testing?

- a. **No.** Testing will take place once per week right in your child's classroom. Testing will be done first thing in the morning and then students will continue with their typical day.

4. How long does it take to get results?

- a. Pool tests typically take 24 hours to result. The parent or guardian will only be notified if their student is part of a positive pool. **No news is good news!**

5. What happens if my child is part of a positive pool?

- a. If your student is part of a positive pool then they will be called to the health office to be retested with a rapid antigen test. This test is also a less invasive swab (low in the nose) and does not hurt. The results take just 15 minutes and as long as your student tests negative they will return to their classroom. If antigen testing does not reveal a positive result then the pool members will immediately complete an individual PCR test by the school nurse. This test is also less invasive and does not hurt. The PCR results typically take 24 hours to complete and members of the pool will be sent home to quarantine until they are notified of their results.

6. What if my child tests positive with follow up testing?

- a. If your child tests positive on a rapid or PCR test this means they currently have the covid virus and they will be dismissed from school and will isolate for 10 days at home following state isolation guidelines. Close contacts (anyone who has been within 6 feet of the

student for 15 minutes or more in a 24 hour period) will be asked to quarantine. The current DPH quarantine guidance states that close contacts must quarantine for a total of 7 days if they test negative on or after day 5. Your school nurse will assist you with this process.

7. What if my child is nervous to participate or does not tolerate testing well?

- a. We recommend that you practice with your child at home. They can use a Q-Tip and practice rotating it in their lower nostrils 3 times on each side. If your student is still nervous when the time comes to do their test they will not be forced to participate. Some students may feel better watching for the first week before they participate themselves.
- b. No students will be forced to test. If they are not tolerating testing or decide that they are too nervous to test then they simply won't test that week.
- c. Watch this [video](#) from our Pool Testing Company, CIC Health, with your child to alleviate their concerns.

8. How do I sign my child up?

- a. Please click this [link](#) and choose your child's school
- b. Consents only need to be filled out one time for the year
- c. New consents should be sent in by Friday at 10:00 in order to participate in testing for the next week
- d. If you need a paper copy please call you school nurse and she will send one home with your student
- e. We will continually add students to the weekly pool testing rosters (but the consents must be in by Friday morning for the next week's pool tests.)

9. What if the online registration link in Project Beacon does not work?

- a. Please try a different browser and attempt signing up again. This seems to be a common issue.
- b. Make sure when you are **signing up your child** to make it a **"Secondary Profile."**
- c. **Please make a profile for your student. Parents and guardians should not be making profiles for themselves unless they work for the district.**
- d. *Notify Amy Brown, Nock Secretary, if you make a mistake or are still having issues with signing up for pool testing at abrown@newburyport.k12.ma.us.*

10. What laboratory are we using for Pool Testing?

- a. Our Pool Testing Company is CIC Health which uses the Broad Institute to process our pool PCR tests as well as our individual PCR tests if they are needed.
- b. The Newburyport School District obtained a CLIA waiver to perform rapid Binax Now Antigen tests by each school nurse in every school building if it is needed to identify the positive person in a pool.

