

Dept. of Health Services: Highlights COVID-19 testing integrity

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COVID-19 Testing Provider Complaint Process Available

The current surge in COVID-19 cases has led to an increased demand for testing services across Wisconsin. The Department of Health Services (DHS) and Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) are informing Wisconsinites how to find trusted COVID-19 testing sites, and how to share concerns related to testing sites.

“Testing remains a critical tool during this COVID-19 surge, and the quality and integrity of our testing activities across the state is critical to fighting this virus,” said DHS Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. “Anyone concerned about their experience is encouraged to contact DHS to ensure that testing sites are following federal and state requirements.”

Wisconsinites can direct complaints about a COVID-19 testing experience to the DHS Office of Inspector General by calling 877-865-3432 or reporting [online\(link is external\)](#). Examples of complaints include incorrect results, missing results, fake results, testing quality, testing site cleanliness, insurance billing, inappropriate fees for tests, testing fraud such as fake test kits, and other related topics.

“With the arrival of the Omicron variant, the need for COVID-19 testing has significantly increased. This can lead to an increase in potential scams, poor quality services, or the compromise of personal information,” said Inspector General Anthony Baize.

To ensure Wisconsinites are receiving COVID-19 testing from a trusted testing provider, DHS encourages people to use trusted testing options, including sites

listed on the DHS [COVID-19: Community Testing Sites](#) webpage, health care providers, and local and tribal health departments.

If you need to get tested for COVID-19, DHS recommends the following:

- Find a [free community testing site](#) to see if an appointment or registration is needed.
- Check to see if your local pharmacy is offering free community testing.
- Check to see if your workplace offers testing.
- Contact your doctor and ask if your health care clinic provides testing.
- See if your child attends a school that participates in the DHS [K-12 School Testing Program](#). Students, faculty, staff, and in some cases family members at participating schools may be tested at the school for free.
- See if your child attends a child care program that has access to DHS testing.
- Request a [free at-home collection kit](#) from DHS.
- Request a free test from the federal government at [COVIDTests.gov\(link is external\)](#).

New testing sites continue to open. With appointments filling rapidly, Wisconsinites may find themselves at an unfamiliar testing site. If you select a testing site operated by an independent business, use the following guidelines to help protect you from a site that may not be legitimate.

- **Don't pay cash.** Most insurance will cover the cost of COVID-19 testing. Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) also cover COVID-19 testing. Ask a provider if they accept health insurance.
- **Do not provide your personal information.** Providers that ask for your Social Security number, passport, driver license, or other personal information may be involved in identity theft scams. However, providers may ask for your ID to verify your information if they are intending to bill insurance.
- **Ask when and how you will get your results.** Testing providers should tell you when you will receive results, or at least provide a range, such as 2-3 days. They should also explain how you will receive results, such as by email, mail, or phone.
- **Ask about certification.** The federal government assigns a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) number to approved COVID-19 testing facilities that perform rapid onsite testing. You can learn in advance whether a testing lab has a CLIA number by typing in the lab name. The lab name will pop up if they've been assigned a CLIA number.

- **Confirm that results will be reported.** Find out if the testing provider reports COVID-19 test results to state and federal agencies, which they are required to do.
- **Buy FDA-authorized COVID-19 tests.** Only purchase testing kits from reputable companies and be on the lookout for copycat company names with suspicious websites or spelling errors.

“These guidelines can help consumers understand how to protect themselves from potential fraud or identity theft,” said DATCP Secretary Randy Romanski.

“Scammers try to take advantage of people in vulnerable situations, and it’s important to use reliable sources to prevent access to your personal information.”

For up-to-date information about Wisconsin’s COVID-19 response, visit the [DHS COVID-19 webpage](#), and follow @DHSWI on [Facebook\(link is external\)](#), [Twitter\(link is external\)](#), or dhs.wi on [Instagram\(link is external\)](#) for more information on COVID-19.