

SURGE TESTING

What is surge testing?

Surge testing efforts will immediately increase testing support for communities throughout Wisconsin now facing dramatic increases of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations related to the ongoing outbreak.

What will it entail?

United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is partnering with the UW System and its 13 universities to provide free antigen testing to anyone 5 years and older to the community at-large. There will be 250,000 tests available.

What kind of tests?

These are Abbott BinaxNOW antigen tests that provide a result in about 15 minutes. The federal government purchased Abbott BinaxNOW diagnostic tests on August 27 to ensure equitable distribution of the first 150 million units – one day after an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) was issued by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The UW System universities will be the first testing sites using the BinaxNOW.

Will there be PCR tests?

PCR Tests distributed by the federal government and allocated by the state Department of Health Services will be used as a confirmatory test in line with Department of Health Services existing protocol.

Why is the UW System doing this?

UW System and its universities are leveraging an opportunity to enhance testing in their communities in an effort to halt the spread of COVID-19. This is the embodiment of the Wisconsin idea in which our university system uses its capacity, resources, and expertise to solve problems and help people.

Why did HHS choose Wisconsin?

HHS responds to state and local communities dealing with outbreaks. Surge testing is intended to help local, state, and federal public health experts identify new cases, including asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic. Identifying asymptomatic “silent spreaders” is critical to combatting the outbreak in Wisconsin.

When will campus sites be up and running?

As soon as possible. In some cases, as early as this week, thanks to the cooperative efforts of the federal, state and local governments.

Will there be a cost to those getting a test?

No.

Do you have to be experiencing symptoms, be a close contact, or be a community resident to get a test?

No.

How are they administered?

They are self-administered using a light nasal swab under the supervision of medical professionals.

What is the role of the UW System and universities?

UW System worked with the federal government to secure the tests and offered the assistance of the universities, which are setting up testing sites in an extraordinary effort.

How will people know about the sites?

Universities will be working with local public health to publicize the testing sites.

Can they just show up or do they need to register?

Register for the free test at www.doineedacovid19test.com. Participants must also use the site to obtain results. The locations for testing will become available as they are up and running.