

Minnesota is currently experiencing high circulation of variants of COVID-19. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) estimates that 60% of all COVID-19 cases in Minnesota are the B.1.1.7 variant, which is a new version of the virus that spreads more easily. **The B.1.1.7 variant has caused a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases, with many of them happening in school and youth sports and activities.**

In order to slow the spread of the virus and continue in-person learning, Minnesota is providing free COVID-19 test kits for middle and high schools to offer on-site testing for our students. Beginning April 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, Win-E-Mac School will begin offering free COVID-19 testing for all students, grades 7-12, every other week through the end of the year.

**For your student to take part in testing, you will need to sign and complete an acknowledgement form. A copy will also be sent home with your student or can be requested at our school's front office.**

**Additionally, as long as students don't have symptoms and have not been close to someone with COVID-19, they do not need to stay out of school, sports or activities while awaiting test results. Learn more about [student COVID-19 testing](#).**

The in-school COVID-19 testing program is intended to help identify those children who have COVID-19 even though they have no symptoms of illness so that we can prevent further spread of the virus. If students have symptoms, stay home and get a test from [one of Minnesota's free community testing sites](#) or through their health care provider.

If students are unable to take part in our on-site COVID-19 testing event, there are many other options to get tested at no cost:

- Families can visit [one of Minnesota's free community testing sites](#),
- Get tested through a health care provider, or
- [Order an at-home test kit](#) and return the completed test to school. Our school will be sending shipments to the lab on the following dates: 4/30, 5/14 and 5/28

In-person or language line assistance is available at community testing sites. Some testing sites also have COVID Community Coordinators to help walk people through the testing process. Learn more on the [COVID Community Coordinator](#) page of the MDH website.

Additionally, all youth in grades 6-12 who are participating in club or school sports are strongly encouraged to get tested at least once per week for COVID-19. Learn more on the [Stay Safe Minnesota – Organized Sports](#) webpage.