



Public Information Release

COVID-19 At-Home Test Kits

March 12, 2021

At-home test kits for COVID-19 are available in Madison County. The test kits are available free of charge for people who have symptoms of COVID-19. The Madison County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) will provide a test kit to a Madison County resident who requests one. EMA Director Deb Sims said that residents can call to schedule a time to pick up a test kit. "We are excited to partner with Public Health to offer these test kits. Residents can call 740-852-4200 during the week to set up an appointment to pick up a kit," she said. Whenever possible a family member or friend who is not sick should pick up the test kit.

The kits are rapid antigen tests that produce results in fifteen minutes. The tests require the use of a computer or laptop with a webcam and internet connection. A test professional guides the patient using video chat to make sure the test is done correctly and results are accurate.

According to Health Commissioner Chris Cook, Ohio is one of three states that partnered with companies Abbott and eMed to provide take-home test kits to residents who have symptoms of COVID-19. "We've been working for months to increase testing for our residents," Cook said. "These test kits can be used within the first seven days of symptoms starting," he said. The test kits are free but are not intended to be used as a regular screening tool. "These kits are accurate when used by people who have at least one symptom of COVID-19," Cook said. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

Last month Madison County Public Health provided test kits to all county schools and several other locations that serve high-needs populations. "We put these at-home test kits into our schools so parents could access a free test if their student has a symptom of COVID-19," Cook reported. "We know there is a need for fast testing in our county." Dr. Lou Kramer, Superintendent of London City Schools, said that the test kits are another tool to keep kids safely in school as much as possible. "If a student has symptoms we can offer the parent or guardian a test kit to use at home. If it's negative they can get back to school quickly after their other symptoms resolve," he said.

Cook said that the test kits are a reliable option for sick people who want to know if they have COVID-19 especially if they are not able to make an appointment for a test with their healthcare provider. "Madison Health continues to offer diagnostic testing at their hospital testing center and that is the most reliable testing we have," Cook said. "But this is another great option for our residents." Positive antigen tests are reported to the Ohio Department of Health as probable cases. Positive cases are required to isolate at home for at least ten days so they do not spread COVID-19 to other people. Since the kits only test for COVID-19, people should check with their healthcare provider to rule out bacterial infections or co-infection with other viruses.

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