



People listened to speakers at a rally at the legislature on Sunday in support of the proposed deal with Russia. **TIMES COLONIST**

# Lineups at pharmacies for free COVID-19 rapid-test kits

COVID-19 tests will be available in pharmacies starting Monday. The rollout will be staggered by age group, starting with those 70 and older. Pharmacies will have to provide a B.C. Services Card to receive a test kit. The limit is one kit per person within a 28-day period.

Those who get a positive result from a rapid test are required to isolate for at least five days or until recovered and symptoms have resolved. If you have symptoms but get a negative result, you are still advised to stay home or away from others until symptoms are gone.

Higher-risk people who are symptomatic are advised to seek a PCR test through a COVID testing centre.

Rapid tests have also been distributed to COVID-19 testing sites, long-term care sites, health-care workers, rural and remote Indigenous communities, K-12 schools, businesses and child-care facilities.

Many people under 70 already have access to rapid tests because of the large number distributed to K-to-12 schools and post-secondary institutions, said Dix. Anyone who receives a positive rapid test result is asked to report the result and notify close contacts. Instructions can be found on the B.C. Centre for Disease Control website at [bccdc.ca](http://bccdc.ca).

**CINDY E. HARNETT**  
Times Colonist

Pharmacist Vikram Bawa was waiting for more supplies of rapid COVID tests on Tuesday after handing out about 300 packs since Friday, when distribution of the free tests to people age 70 and older began in parts of B.C. "We started distributing last Friday and we've had long lineups since then," Bawa said at Fort Royal Pharmacy on Oak Bay Avenue.

About 160 pharmacies on Vancouver Island from Port Hardy to Victoria, including the Gulf Islands, were distributing the free rapid antigen tests in packs of five on Tuesday. There are 914 participating pharmacies in the province, up from 600 last week.

Health Minister Adrian Dix said as of Monday, more than 70,000 seniors age 70 and older had picked up the test packs at pharmacies in the province. Some communities began distributing them on Friday while others started on Monday.

On Vancouver Island, the packs are available in everything from small pharmacies such as Joe's Family Pharmacy in Saanichton and Lallicare Pharmacy in Victoria to pharmacies in grocery stores such as Country Grocer and Save-On Foods, pharmacies in drug stores including Shoppers Drug Mart and London Drugs, and in big-box stores including Walmart and Costco.

Dix said test packs will soon be made available to a broader audience. B.C. is expected to receive 12 million tests in weekly intervals over the next month. "We're going to move really quickly down the age groups," he said.

COVID-19 vaccines were offered to those in the 80 and

older age categories first, dropping in five-year increments every few days or so. The rollout for rapid test packs will be similar, said Dix, starting next with those age 65 and older. "I would expect that to happen in the coming days," said Dix.

People age 70 and over, who are at higher risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, must show their B.C. Services Card (health card) at pharmacies to get a free test kit. The limit is one kit per person within a 28-day period. Anyone picking up a kit for a family member or another person must provide their name and date of birth and show their B.C. Services Card.

Those who get a positive result from a rapid test are required to isolate for at least five days or until recovered and symptoms have resolved. If you have symptoms but get a negative result, you are still advised to stay home or away from others until symptoms are gone.

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## as they seek new wage deal

safety

Smith said. The union has 90

Members of the Canadian