MASTER Community DEVELOPER

Health

How Accurate Are Rapid Antigen Tests?

A big part of the new norm is practicing regular testing for tracking of COVID-19. Whether it be before or after a big gathering, after being in close contact with a COVID-19 positive patient or part of school and work policies, many of us have had ample experience fearing the "double lines".

These self-tests, or rapid antigen tests, return a positive depending on the virus count (its protein levels) in the cartridge. More recently, the community has been questioning the accuracy of the rapid antigen tests, with many reports of false negatives.

Why do these false negatives happen and how can we prevent them?

Sampling Timing

If the test is taken too early, the virus count would not have had enough time to incubate and amplify, resulting in a false negative. It is recommended that people take a self-test over a 36- to 48- hour period to increase the odds of detecting an infection.

Sampling Quality

If the cotton swab is not inserted deep enough into the nose or the user collected a saliva sample without first coughing 3 – 5 times, the cartridge may return a false negative. Be precise and proper in following the instructions on the packaging.

Brand Reliability

Self-test kits are available through online stores from all around the world, but the reliability of these tests should be viewed with precaution. Only purchase self-test kits from a reliable source, such as a certified pharmacy or clinic.

N95 Mask

RECOMMENDED AGAINST OMICRON

KN95 Mask

N95 and KN95 masks can filter 95% of particles in the air. Though N95 masks are more uncomfortable, they reduce COVID-19 transmission up to 75-fold!

It's negative!

It's positive!

COVID-19 Ag

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Ultimately, if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms but tested negative with a rapid antigen test, visit your local clinic to undergo a PCR test for a more accurate result.

SUNWAY MEDICAL CENTRE

Click here to visit Sunway Medical Centre's COVID-19 Information page for more info

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