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To / Dest. Physicians and Nurse Practitioners in both RHAs, NBMS / médecins et aux infirmières praticiennes (par l'entremise des RRS et de la SMNB)

From / Exp. Dr. / Dre Cristin Muecke, Deputy Chief Medical Officer of Health / Médecin-hygiéniste en chef adjointe

Copies Dr. Jennifer Russell, Heidi Liston, RMOHs, Jeff McCarthy, Penny Higdon, Louis-Alexandre Jalbert, Lori Clarke, Danielle McLennan, Noortje Kunnen, Jeff Campbell, Janique Robichaud-Savoie, RHA Public Health Directors / directeurs de santé publique des RRS

Subject / Objet **COVID-19 gargle test method / la méthode de dépistage de la COVID-19 par gargarisme**


Starting Monday November 16, the COVID-19 gargle test method will be available at COVID-19 assessment centers in New Brunswick for children aged 4-11 years (or older if necessary) who have pre-existing anxiety or resistance to submitting to nasopharyngeal (NP) specimen collection. There are a couple of important points to be aware of if your patients inquire about this new option.

- NP swabs remain the gold standard for COVID-19 specimen collection and the first choice that will be offered in the assessment center.
- The gargle method is only validated for COVID-19 testing. If you require influenza or respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) testing a NP or nares/throat swab will be required.
- Children have to practice the method ahead of time as it requires swishing and gargling sterile saline several times. As such the need for this alternate method should be identified before the designated appointment time.

À compter du lundi 16 novembre, la méthode de dépistage de la COVID-19 par gargarisme sera offerte dans les centres d'évaluation COVID-19 au Nouveau-Brunswick pour les enfants de 4 à 11 ans (ou plus vieux au besoin) qui souffrent de troubles d'anxiété préexistants ou qui ne veulent pas se soumettre à des prélèvements d'échantillons nasopharyngés (NP). Voici quelques points importants à considérer si vos patients veulent en savoir plus sur cette nouvelle option.

- Les écouvillons NP demeurent la méthode idéale pour prélever des échantillons liés à la COVID-19 et seront offerts en priorité dans les centres de dépistage.
- La méthode par gargarisme n'est validée que pour les tests de dépistage de la COVID-19. Si vous avez besoin de tests de dépistage pour la grippe ou le virus respiratoire syncytial (VRS), il faudra utiliser les écouvillons NP ou les écouvillons oropharyngés/nasaux.
- Les enfants doivent s'exercer à l'avance puisqu'ils doivent se rincer la bouche et se gargariser avec de l'eau salée stérile plusieurs fois. Par conséquent, le recours à la méthode de dépistage par gargarisme doit être déterminé avant le rendez-vous.

- In order to get an accurate result, the patient should not eat, drink (even water), chew gum or brush teeth for at least one hour before the test.
- Children under 4 years or those who are unable to follow the gargle instructions, and won't undergo a NP swab, can be offered a nares/throat swab.
- Afin d'obtenir un résultat exact, le patient ne doit pas manger, boire (même de l'eau), mâcher de la gomme ou se brosser les dents pendant au moins une heure avant le test.
- On peut offrir des prélèvements oropharyngés/nasaux aux enfants de moins de 4 ans ou à ceux qui ne sont pas capables de suivre les instructions de gargarisme ni de subir un prélèvement avec écouvillon NP.



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COVID-19 Swish and Gargle Test for Children




The COVID-19 swish and gargle test method may be offered for children aged 4-11 who are anxious or are unwilling to take the nasopharyngeal swab test. For children under 4, or for those not able to follow the swish, gargle and spit instructions, the nose and throat swab may be offered. Either of these tests will accurately tell you if your child has COVID-19.

With the COVID-19 swish and gargle test, children ages 4-11 can simply swish, gargle and spit some sterile salt water or saline solution into a tube instead of getting a nasopharyngeal swab. The swish and gargle or saline rinse test is easy to do, but your child should practice before going to the testing assessment center.

Before you go:

- Help your child practice **at least one hour** before taking the test. Practicing could affect test results
- Tell child not to swallow the salty water or talk when they practice

How to make a saline solution and take a practice test:

-  Gather supplies for making a saline solution:
 - 1 cup (240 ml) of warm water
 - ½ teaspoon (2.5 ml) of household table salt
-  Mix salt in the water until it is fully dissolved
-  Let homemade saline cool to room temperature
-  Tell your child it will taste salty like ocean water and not to swallow, talk or spit it out
-  Ask your child to open their mouth wide
-  Give 1 tsp (5 ml) of cooled saline to your child
-  Swish. Gargle. Swish. Gargle. Swish. Gargle. Spit.

IMPORTANT!

Children should not eat, drink (even water), chew gum, or brush teeth for **at least one hour** before the swish and gargle saline rinse test. This might affect the amount of virus that is in their mouth, which can affect the results of the test.

COVID-19 Swish and Gargle Test for Children

Additional Information

Disinfection

If your child spits out the salty liquid in the car following the test, make sure to properly clean your vehicle as there may be COVID-19 virus particles:

- Wash your hands before and after cleaning
- If possible, wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be thrown away after cleaning
- A disinfectant wipe is not suitable for cleaning fabric. Use the recommended COVID-19 cleaning solutions
- Spray the solution onto the cleaning cloth and wipe down any hard surfaces. Throw the cloth in the garbage
- Spray cleaner on cloth and rub thoroughly across all the upholstery. Throw the cloth in the garbage
- Let seat dry before using

Self-isolate

Children who are symptomatic with 2 or more symptoms or have been identified by Public Health will need to self-isolate after their test. This means they should go directly home after their test. Children who are required to self-isolate should stay home from school and not see visitors. Learn more about [self-isolating after a test](#).

Children can stop isolating and return to school if they get a negative test and they are feeling well – unless they have been asked by Public Health to continue to self-isolate. This might happen if a child has been exposed to someone with COVID-19. If a child tests positive, Public Health will provide instructions on when they can end isolation.

Accessing and understanding test results

At the testing assessment center, you will be provided an access code. Register your child for a [MyHealthNB](#) account using the access code. Your child's result should appear within 48 hours after taking the test. If you are unable to register your child for MyHealthNB, someone from Service New Brunswick will call you within 72 hours with the result.