

## Who has to get tested?

Starting the week of Monday, September 27, Mount Sinai Health System (MSHS) employees, hospital staff, faculty members, students, and trainees with an approved exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine mandate determined by the MSHS Exemption Committee, or a pending request for an exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine mandate submitted in accordance with MSHS policy, must be tested weekly for SARS-CoV-2.

## Does the individual need to enroll in the testing program?

If an individual meets the criteria for weekly testing and reports to you as their line manager, you are responsible for ensuring that that person completes the [Informed Consent for COVID-19 Saliva Testing](#) form. Upon completion, please scan the form and upload it to the [Employee Testing Consent REDCap tool](#) by close of business on Friday, October 1. Other than this form, no enrollment is required.

## What should I do if the individual refuses to sign the Informed Consent for COVID-19 Saliva Testing?

Please notify HR and Labor immediately if an individual refuses to sign the consent.

## How can my employee withdraw their request for vaccine exemption?

Employees can withdraw their medical or religious exemption request at any time by [clicking here](#).

## What if my employee is partially vaccinated (one dose)?

Employees who have been partially vaccinated (one dose) by Friday, October 1, 2021 are not required to test. The employees have 30 days from their first dose to become fully vaccinated. EHS will follow up to ensure they have received their second dose in the accepted window.

## What should I do if my employee is on PTO or other approved leave before the October 1 deadline?

Please inform EHS by email at [testingexempt@mountsinai.org](mailto:testingexempt@mountsinai.org) with the employee's name, life number, and expected date of return to duty.

## If my employee works remotely, is on PTO, or on FMLA for the entire week, will they still have to test?

No, employees need only be tested when onsite at a MSHS facility or an affiliate site. It is the employee's responsibility to report out-of-office time to [testingexempt@mountsinai.org](mailto:testingexempt@mountsinai.org) with their name, life number, and the dates or range of dates they will be offsite. They will be taken off the dashboard for that time.

## How can I track individuals' compliance with the weekly testing program?

All line managers who have individuals in the mandatory testing program have been provided access to a dashboard to track their compliance with the program. The access is limited to only those who directly oversee the employees in scope. The dashboard shows when the employee is compliant, and highlights when they are delinquent. If an employee has to be taken out of work, EHS and HR will work together to notify the employee and manager.

## Can I give another manager access to the dashboard in my absence?

Yes, please email [testingexempt@mountsinai.org](mailto:testingexempt@mountsinai.org) to notify the dashboard team of your out-of-office time, and the team can issue access temporarily. We are committed to limiting access to the dashboard to only those who need it.

## How often do individuals need to be tested?

If an individual has been approved for or has a pending exemption request from the vaccine mandate, they are required to get tested **weekly** for infection with SARS-CoV-2 as a condition of continued employment or matriculation.

## How is testing scheduled?

Individuals are responsible for arranging to complete and submit their weekly tests. EHS will have test kits available for them to pick up and return with their saliva specimen. Testing kits can be picked up and dropped off at any local EHS office during its hours of operation. Please check the [Information on the Mandatory COVID-19 Testing Program](#) webpage for hours of EHS operation.

### **Does the individual need to test on the same day every week?**

The testing week is defined as Sunday through Saturday and testing through EHS must be completed:

- At least three days apart (e.g. if test is on Friday, the next test **cannot be before** Monday), and
- No more than eight days apart (e.g. if test is on a Monday, the next test **must be on or before** Tuesday of the following week.)

### **If my employee works remotely, is on PTO, or on FMLA for the entire week, will they still have to test?**

If the employee has an authorized leave of absence for the entire workweek (e.g., vacation, sick leave, jury duty, bereavement leave), they are not required to undergo testing for that week. It is the employee's responsibility to report out of office time to [testingexempt@mountsinai.org](mailto:testingexempt@mountsinai.org) with their name, life number, and the dates or range of dates they will be offsite. They will be taken off the dashboard for that time.

### **If an individual recently had COVID-19, should they still get tested?**

If an individual received a **conditional** medical exemption due to a recent COVID-19 infection, they do not have to undergo weekly testing. If an individual is newly diagnosed with COVID-19 and has a positive PCR result through the testing program, EHS will provide guidance on the appropriate testing protocol.

### **What if an individual has symptoms of COVID-19?**

If an individual develops symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of PCR test results or vaccine status they **must** contact their supervisor immediately and leave the workplace. Additionally, they **must** report the symptoms to EHS through the [EHS COVID-19 Illness REDCap tool](#) (click the link or scan this QR code).

They may not return to work onsite until cleared by EHS.



If an individual is undergoing weekly testing and tests positive for COVID-19, weekly testing will be suspended for up to 90 days from the date that they tested positive. They should not report to work if they test positive, and need to contact EHS to determine duration of isolation. EHS will notify the individual and the line manager when testing must be restarted.

### **What happens if someone's PCR test results are positive?**

EHS will contact the individual if their PCR results are positive. The individual will need to immediately leave work/school (if they are contacted during their work shift or classes) and self-isolate for 10 days. During this time they will have to use accumulated PTO or other leave time if available, as appropriate. If previously agreed with the line manager that the employee can work remotely, they can continue to work offsite. They may not return to work onsite until cleared by EHS. Weekly testing will be suspended for up to 90 days.

### **Are there any possible risks to getting tested?**

There are no health risks to getting tested. Although MSHS has validated the test being used, there is no 100 percent accurate COVID-19 diagnostic test, and it is possible that the test will result in a false positive or a false negative result. That means that if a test comes back positive, it is possible that in reality there is no COVID-19 infection, and if a test comes back negative, it is possible that in reality there is a COVID-19 infection.

### **If my employee works remotely and has an exemption, do they need to be tested?**

Employees who work remotely only need to be tested on weeks that they are working onsite. It is the employee's responsibility to notify EHS when they are working remotely.

## **Where can my employee test if they do not work near an EHS location?**

In addition to the seven EHS sites, EHS has partnered with five Network locations where employees can pick up and submit a saliva test kit in Hewlett, Greenlawn, Jackson Heights, Staten Island (Klondike), and Manhasset. Email [testingexempt@mountsinai.org](mailto:testingexempt@mountsinai.org) for more information on the satellite sites.

Employees can also choose to get tested at a location outside MSHS and upload their results to REDCap ([click this link](#)). Any cost associated with testing outside these EHS and Network sites is the employee's responsibility.

## **If my employee work nights and/or weekends, can they pick up testing kits and drop off specimens during their shift?**

It is the employee's responsibility to contact EHS if they will not be onsite during EHS hours of operation. EHS will work with them to make sure they are compliant with the weekly testing requirements.

## **If my employee works at multiple sites, where do they go to be tested?**

Testing kits can be picked up and specimens dropped off at any EHS location during its regular business hours.

## **What happens if an individual misses their weekly test?**

If an individual misses their weekly test and/or does not submit a specimen within eight days of their last test, their line manager and Human Resources will be notified. They will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment, educational programs, the faculty, or the medical staff.

## **What if my employee says they are appealing a denial for an exemption?**

All exemption decisions have been made by this point. People who submitted requests for religious exemptions are considered conditionally approved, pending court decisions. Medical exemptions have been issued and are final. If you are concerned that your employee is not in compliance, please contact [testingexempt@mountsinai.org](mailto:testingexempt@mountsinai.org) and/or HR.

## **How does the testing process work?**

A home collection PCR saliva test is used for the weekly testing program that the individual completes on their own time. They will receive a home saliva testing kit from EHS each time they drop off their current week's specimen. The following week, they will prepare the saliva specimen no more than 12 hours prior to dropping it off at an EHS site. Tests must be taken at least three days but no more than eight days apart.

## **Can someone eat or drink before taking the saliva test?**

Individuals cannot eat or drink anything other than water, smoke, or chew gum for at least **30 minutes** before they provide the saliva sample for their test. They cannot brush their teeth or use mouthwash for at least **two hours** before they provide the sample.

If someone has eaten, drunk, brushed/washed, chewed gum, or smoked more recently than the recommended time, they will need to wait until enough time has passed to complete the test.

## **How do individuals get their results?**

Results are typically available 24 to 36 hours after samples are dropped off at EHS. Negative test results will be sent to MyChart for individuals to view; a member of the EHS team will call individuals if their test results are positive.

## **Can an employee be tested outside of EHS if they prefer?**

Yes, if an employee does not live and/or work near an MSHS EHS site, they can choose to be tested weekly outside of MSHS and report their results to EHS. If they test outside of EHS, they are responsible for any related costs.

## **If someone chooses to be tested outside of EHS, what type of tests are accepted?**

# Mandatory COVID-19 Testing: Frequently Asked Questions for Line Managers



With few exceptions, MSHS will accept all SARS-CoV-2 PCR (NAAT) tests that have received an EUA (emergency use authorization) from the Food and Drug Administration and are performed at a CLIA-approved lab. Tests currently **not** accepted include: Abbott IDnow SARS-CoV-2 Point of Care PCR; rapid antigen tests such as the Abbott Binax Now and the BD Veritor Plus Antigen test.

## **If an individual chooses to get tested outside of EHS, how often do they need to get tested?**

Testing must be completed and submitted **weekly** to EHS. The testing week is defined as Sunday through Saturday and testing must be completed:

- At least three days apart (e.g. if test is on Friday, the next test **cannot be before** Monday), and
- No more than seven days apart (e.g. if test is on a Monday, the next test **must be on or before** Monday of the following week.)

## **If someone is tested outside of EHS, how do they report the results?**

Employees are responsible for uploading a copy of the test results into the [Mandatory Testing REDCap tool](#) within 24 hours of receiving the results.

## **If an individual chooses to get vaccinated, will they need to continue in the weekly testing program?**

Once an individual reports being vaccinated and EHS verifies that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, they will be removed from the weekly testing program.

## **Will I be notified when the religious exemption decision is made by the courts?**

Yes, EHS and HR will update the testing eligibility once a decision is made, and notify all affected individuals.

## **How can I learn more about the Mandatory Testing Program?**

More details about the program are available on the [mandatory testing webpage](#), which also contains links to relevant documents. Please feel free to give this link to your staff. If you have additional questions about testing, please email [testingexempt@mountsinai.org](mailto:testingexempt@mountsinai.org).