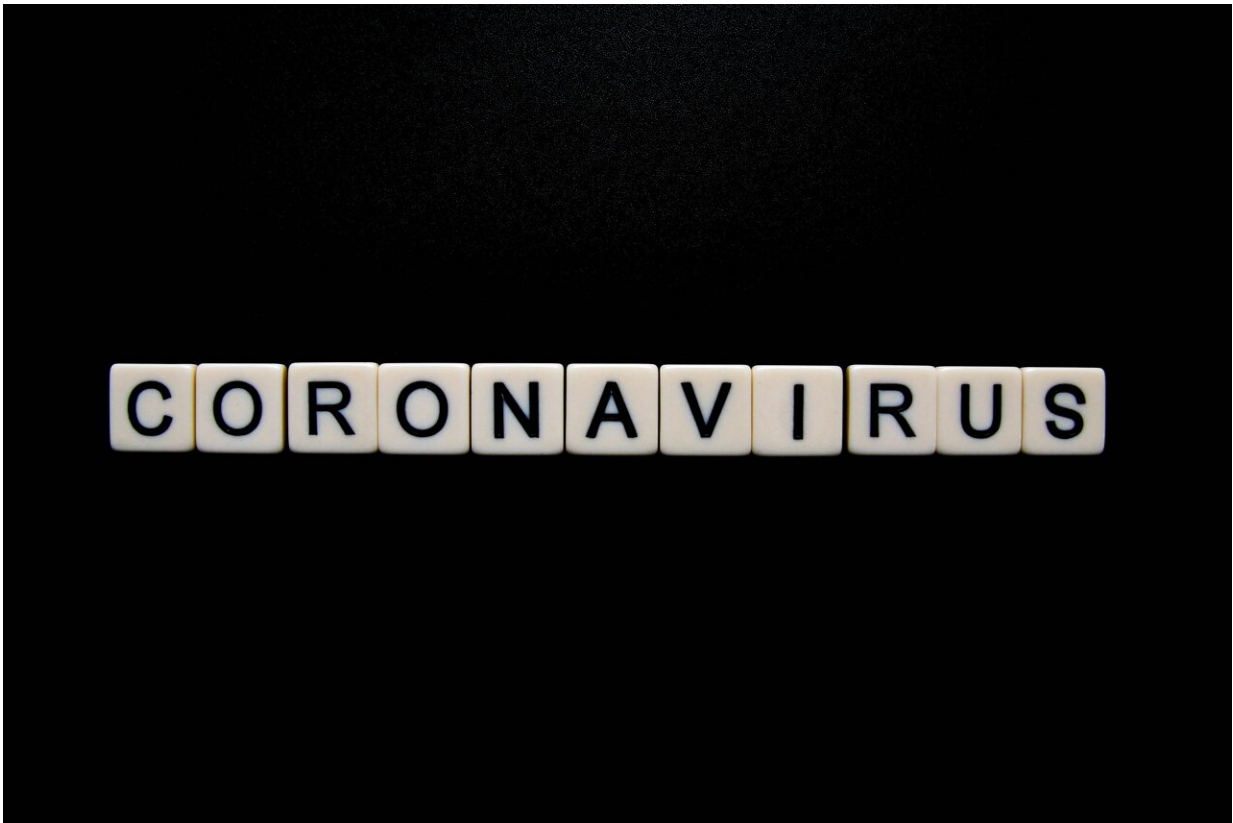


# Trial begins for a child-friendly COVID-19 test

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Children across Australia and the world could soon have access to a less invasive COVID-19 swab following a new device now being trailed at The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH).

The partner study between the RCH and Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), aims to trial Rhinoswab Junior™ in [children](#) who present to the RCH's Respiratory Infection Clinic.

This new device is specially designed for children and sits at the base of the nose where it will collect virus particles for testing. Not only will the test be less invasive, the device will also include child-friendly features to engage children in the sampling process and in turn reduce anxiety for children and their parents.

Recent research by the RCH looking at COVID-19 testing in children found a range of barriers that impact the willingness of parents to attend a testing clinic for their child, with distress being the number one concern.

The study found that almost three-quarters of parents (74 percent) are concerned the COVID-19 test might be stressful, painful or uncomfortable for their child, with 30 percent indicating these worries are very likely to stop them from taking their child to have a [test](#). The highest level of concern is among parents of children from birth to less than five years (80 percent).

"Taking a combined throat and nose sample from children can be challenging for all concerned, yet it's a critical step in detecting and containing COVID-19. Rhinoswab Junior has the potential to turn an [unpleasant experience](#) into a more relaxed and possibly even fun experience for children. The ability of the child to control the insertion of the device coupled with the comfort and novelty of the Rhinoswab design offers major improvements in the child's experience," Dr. Shidan Tosif, RCH Pediatrician and MCRI Clinician-Scientist Fellow.

As we continue to adapt to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic around the world, alternative testing options are needed to ensure continual high

testing rates.

Dr. Tosif says right now is the time to think innovatively about ways we can improve and streamline the current process.

"We are in a position where we need to adapt to the growing need of a less invasive alternative for children as we know each person, whether they are a child or an adult, are going to be subjected to multiple COVID-19 tests as new variants emerge.

"The RCH and MCRI are in a unique position to be leaders in this space to develop a new technique that will have positive outcomes around the world."

The trial will include 250 children aged four to 18 years conducted over 30–50 days. Each child will receive both a standard COVID-19 swab as well as the trial swab to compare the efficacy. The trial will also help assess the use of Rhinoswab™ for other respiratory diseases.

Rhinoswab Junior™ was developed by Melbourne-based Rhinomed Ltd.

Provided by Murdoch Children's Research Institute

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