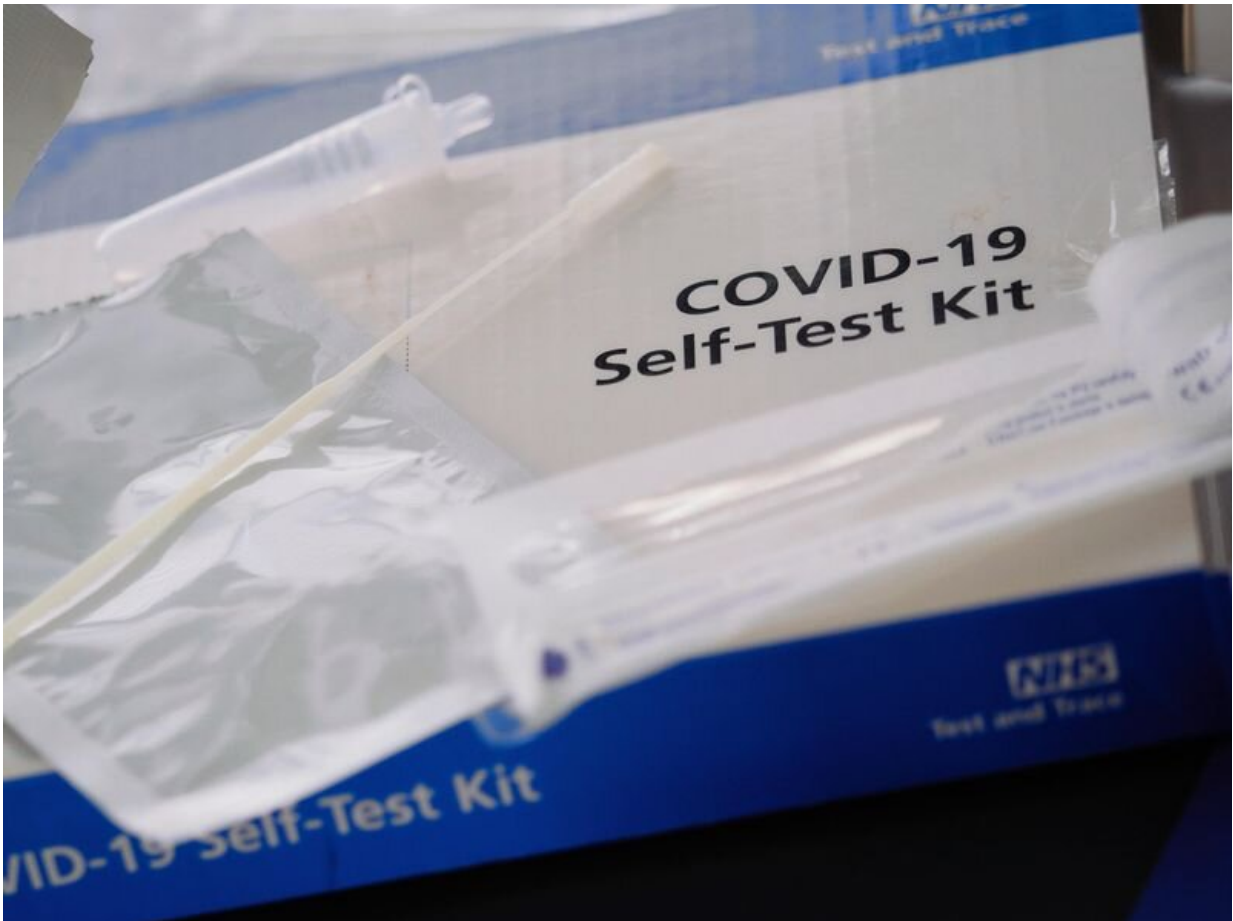


Amid COVID test shortages, price gouging is on the rise

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(HealthDay)—As the Omicron variant blankets America and demand for

COVID-19 tests climbs, so, too, does price gouging.

High [prices](#) for over-the-counter antigen tests are being seen around the country, *CBS News* reported.

"The danger in [health care](#) is that for any lifesaving product—it's vulnerable to price gouging because most people would pay [an] arm and leg—anything—to save the life of a loved one," epidemiologist and health economist Eric Feigl-Ding wrote in a series of [tweets](#).

In New York, Attorney General Letitia James has received complaints of products selling at double or triple the retail price.

"A standard BinaxNOW brand [test](#) kit at a New York store, like Walgreens, costs appropriately between \$14 and \$25 for a package of two tests, however, there has been alleged reports of the same products being unlawfully sold for more than \$40 and up to \$70 per package," James said in a [statement](#) last month.

The internet marketplace for COVID tests isn't much better: Online retailer Tanga is selling the BinaxNow tests for \$59.99 for a box of two or \$349 for 10 boxes. These kits typically retail for \$23.99 at Walgreens or even less at Walmart, where they retail for \$19.88 but are out of stock, *CBS News* reported.

Attorney General's offices around the country have reported receiving complaints or hearing stories of price gouging.

In Georgia, Attorney General Chris Carr called on residents last week "to be on the lookout for fraudulent COVID-19 related practices, specifically as it pertains to testing." Carr said in a [statement](#) that he'd heard reports of overcharging for COVID tests.

Meanwhile North Carolina's Attorney General Josh Stein [asked](#) residents to report pandemic-related price gouging.

North Carolina has a price-gouging law and Stein has taken companies to court before for pandemic-related price gouging. That includes a New Jersey company now barred from selling [personal protective equipment](#) at excessive prices, and a Charlotte company Stein got an injunction against for allegedly booting or towing trucks delivering food, water and medical supplies during the pandemic, *CBS News* reported.

"In particular, our office has heard anecdotally that there may be price gouging occurring on at-home tests," Stein said Wednesday.

While the Biden administration plans to send 500 million at-home tests to Americans for free, that has not happened yet. And an earlier deal struck with retailers Walmart and Kroger to reduce the costs of the tests has expired.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [COVID-19 tests](#).

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