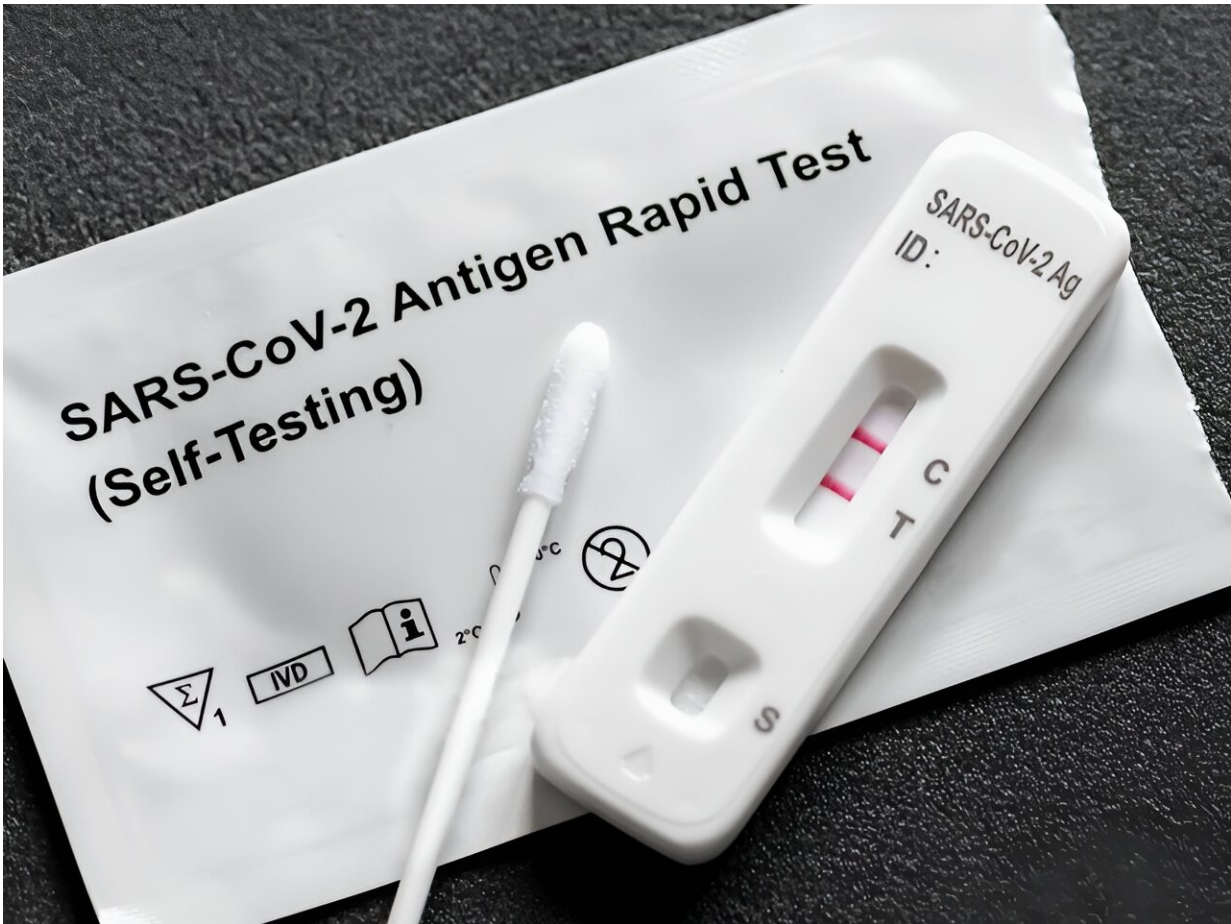


US resumes free COVID test program

September 21 2023, by Cara Murez



Americans will once again be able to get free at-home COVID tests.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced

Wednesday that it will spend \$600 million to buy and offer the tests, produced by 12 domestic manufacturers, and it will begin accepting orders for those tests on Monday through [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov).

"The Biden-Harris Administration, in [partnership](#) with domestic manufacturers, has made great strides in addressing vulnerabilities in the U.S. supply chain by reducing our reliance on overseas manufacturing," HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in an agency [news release](#). "These critical investments will strengthen our nation's production levels of domestic at-home COVID-19 [rapid tests](#) and help mitigate the spread of the virus."

Households that order will receive four free tests.

This plan will not only get tests in the hands of people in case of another COVID surge, but it will also increase domestic manufacturing capacity, officials noted.

Manufacturers can sell tests directly to [retailers](#), rather than the [government](#), if there is significant demand for them, said Dawn O'Connell, assistant secretary for preparedness and response at the HHS.

The government's investment will pay for about 200 million tests to replenish the country's stockpile, the HHS said.

Free tests have been previously offered at other times during the pandemic, including from early 2022 through summer of that year and from late 2022 until the spring of 2023.

The government is also encouraging Americans to get the new COVID boosters.

Becerra received his COVID and flu shots publicly on Wednesday, the

New York Times reported.

"I feel comfortable, having gotten the shots, that I could hug and kiss my mother and not be responsible for getting her sick," Becerra said, adding that, "No one is safe until everyone is safe."

Becerra's mom is about to turn 90.

All Americans starting as young as 6 months old should get at least one dose of the new boosters from Pfizer or Moderna, according to the the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

COVID hospitalizations have been increasing, but are low compared to some earlier parts of the pandemic, the Times reported.

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

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