



HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

US Approves Quick \$5 COVID-19 Test

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The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a new coronavirus test that costs less than others and is simple to use.

The 15-minute test from Abbott Laboratories will sell for \$5. It does not require special computer equipment to get results. The self-contained test is about the size of a credit card. It uses the same technology as some flu and pregnancy tests.

The FDA noted that Abbott's test could be used in a doctor's office, emergency room or some schools. "Given the simple nature of this test, it is likely that these tests could be made broadly available," the FDA said.

The agency also recently approved a **saliva** test from Yale University.

Both newly approved tests have limitations, like requiring medical administration.

Abbott's new test is called BinaxNOW. A health worker must carry out a nasal **swab**, like most older coronavirus tests. The Yale product does not require a swab, but only specialized laboratories can process the test.

Quick tests like Abbott's, however, generally produce less exact results than those processed by laboratories. Abbott said BinaxNOW correctly finds coronavirus infection 97.1 percent of the time, and correctly finds a lack of infection 98.5 percent of the time.

In a statement, the FDA said Abbott's test may need to be confirmed with a lab test in some cases. The agency approved Abbott's test Wednesday night through an emergency use **authorization** process. It can be used only for patients with suspected COVID-19.

The new tests come as schools and businesses around the U.S. are struggling to reopen with limited capability to test everyone for COVID-19.

Abbott announced that it will ship tens of millions of tests in September. The drug company plans to increase to 50 million tests a month at the beginning of October. Test takers can also show their results in a phone app and share them at workplaces or schools.

Most currently available COVID-19 tests have to be sent to a laboratory for results. Dr. Joseph Petrosino is a professor and chairman of Molecular Virology and Microbiology at Baylor College of Medicine in Texas. He said in the announcement from Abbott, "...you get a result right away, getting infectious people off the streets and into **quarantine** so they don't spread the virus."

The U.S. is now testing about 690,000 people each day. That number is down from the 850,000 daily tests late last month. Many public health experts believe the U.S. will soon need to test a lot more people to find those who are infected, quarantine them and contain the virus.

I'm Caty Weaver.

Hai Do wrote this story for Learning English with information from the FDA, Abbott Laboratories and the Associated Press. Caty Weaver was the editor.

Words in This Story

saliva - n. the liquid produced in your mouth

swab - n. a small piece of soft material used for applying medicine

authorization - n. official approval or permission

quarantine - n. the situation of being kept away from others to prevent a disease from spreading
