

Saliva-based testing available in all Laval-area schools

An initiative to make life easier for families and better control the spread of the virus

Laval, January 27, 2021 – The Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de Laval is continuing to roll out saliva-based testing in schools in order to fight the spread of COVID-19 in primary and secondary classrooms in Laval and, in turn, reduce the impact of the virus in the community.

In December 2020, the CISSS de Laval, in cooperation with the Centre de services scolaire de Laval, launched a pilot project in three schools. Given the results obtained, in the next few months, the project will be deployed in all schools of the Centre de services scolaire de Laval, the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board and private schools in the Laval area.

Project rollout

- January 2021 – Eight new schools were included in the project. Approximately 5000 additional students have access to the kits when testing is recommended to them.
- February 2021 – More than 14 schools will be added. Over 15,000 additional students will have access to the kits.
- March-April 2021 – Distribution of kits to all Laval-area schools.
- Secondary cycle two students (ages 14 and over, able to consent to health care) will be tested right at school, before they go home, whenever there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in their class bubble.

Specific testing solutions for settings with outbreaks

A reading of the epidemiological situation in Laval shows that, since the beginning of the pandemic, nearly three quarters (74.8%) of schools in the area have been affected by outbreaks – for a total of 1,149 declared cases. This situation highlights the importance of implementing solutions specifically for school settings.

Promising results

Results from the first phase of the project (the first three schools) were revealing and showed that Laval families have a real need in this respect. More than 70% of the kits distributed in two primary school classes in the first week of January were brought to a testing centre. This helps public health officials have a better idea of the spread of the virus in order to curb its transmission.

As a reminder, the kits are sent to school management, where they are handed out to students in class bubbles affected by a case of COVID-19. Students then do the test at home and return it to a screening clinic without having to wait or book an appointment. This means they have rapid access to a test, which is effective and much less invasive for children. In fact, the wide majority of screening conducted in Laval is now done using saliva-based testing.

Reminder of the key advantages of saliva-based testing:

- Saliva tests are as reliable as oro-nasopharyngeal swabs for all indications, except in rare cases where symptoms began more than 7 days previously.
- The saliva-based test is more comfortable than the swab test.
- The technique does not require the mobilization of health care personnel (self-administered).
- It is fast and easy to explain the procedure to users of the test.
- Saliva-based testing is not dependent on the supply of swabs.

With the exception of students who have received a self-administered saliva collection kit for at-home use, the CISSS de Laval is asking members of the public to book an appointment before going to a COVID-19 screening clinic in order to avoid long lineups outside.

To book an appointment: 1 877 644-4545 (Laval residents and workers).

For up-to-date information on the locations and schedules of screening clinics in Laval: <http://www.lavalensante.com/en/covid19/screening-and-assessment/>

For any other information, you can follow the CISSS de Laval on Twitter [@cissslaval](https://twitter.com/cissslaval)

About the CISSS de Laval

The CISSS de Laval is fully dedicated to learning, innovating and excelling in order to offer residents of Laval and surrounding areas a full range of integrated, quality health and social services accessible to all. Its human capital includes over 10,000 employees and doctors working in 32 facilities, including the Hôpital de la Cité- de-la-Santé, the Jewish Rehabilitation Hospital, the Centre de services ambulatoires de Laval, six CLSCs, five residential centres, the Centre de protection de l'enfance et de la jeunesse de Laval, the Centre de réadaptation en dépendance de Laval and the Centre de réadaptation en déficience intellectuelle et troubles envahissants du développement de Laval. The CISSS de Laval is a research and teaching facility affiliated to Université de Montréal and McGill University. For more information about the CISSS de Laval and the services offered in its facilities, go to www.lavalensante.com.

Information Directorate of Human Resources, Communications and Legal Affairs
Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de Laval
Media line: 450 978-8608 communications.cissslaval@sss.gouv.qc.ca