



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

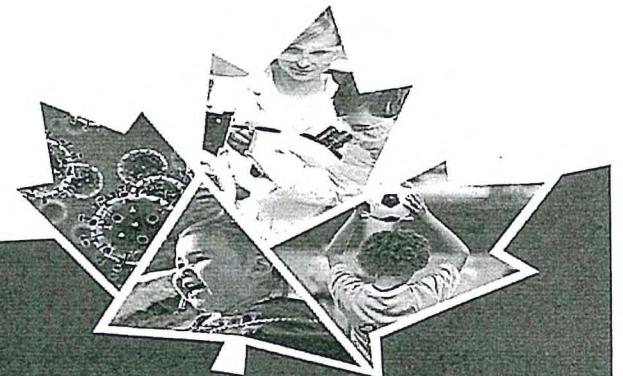
Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada

Canada

# Testing for COVID-19 in Canada

March 23, 2020

PROTECTING AND EMPOWERING CANADIANS  
TO IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH



## Canada's Testing Objectives

1. Diagnosis and clinical management of infected individuals.
2. Driving public health action – contact tracing, self-isolation, quarantine.
3. Monitoring pandemic dynamics within Canada and internationally.

## Canada's Testing Strategy

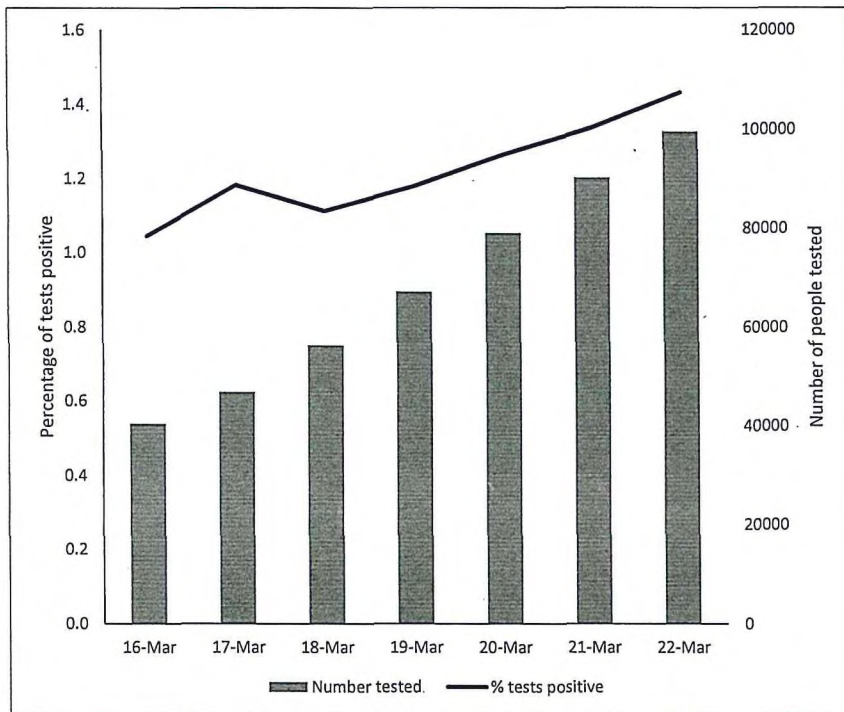
- Test priority populations:
  - Health Care Workers
  - Hospital Patients
  - Long Term Care Facility Residents
  - Remote Communities
- Expand testing based on public health context (eg community transmission)
- Add new testing technologies (eg point of care, rapid diagnostic tests, serologic tests) to increase speed and ease of testing
  - Serology (blood) testing allows testing outside of health care settings and reduces the burden on critical health infrastructure (NML evaluating multiple serology tests for diagnostic accuracy)

## Federal Government Leads Canada's COVID-19 Testing Strategy

- National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) is focal point for testing:
  - Sets National Standards – used by provincial public health laboratories.
  - Develops and validates new testing technologies – analyzes the country's needs to ensure readiness.
  - Provides testing capacity/surge support for provinces/territories - Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, PEI, North Western Ontario.
  - Responds to high priority testing needs in Indigenous communities with provincial public health laboratories.



## Canadians tested as of March 22, 2020



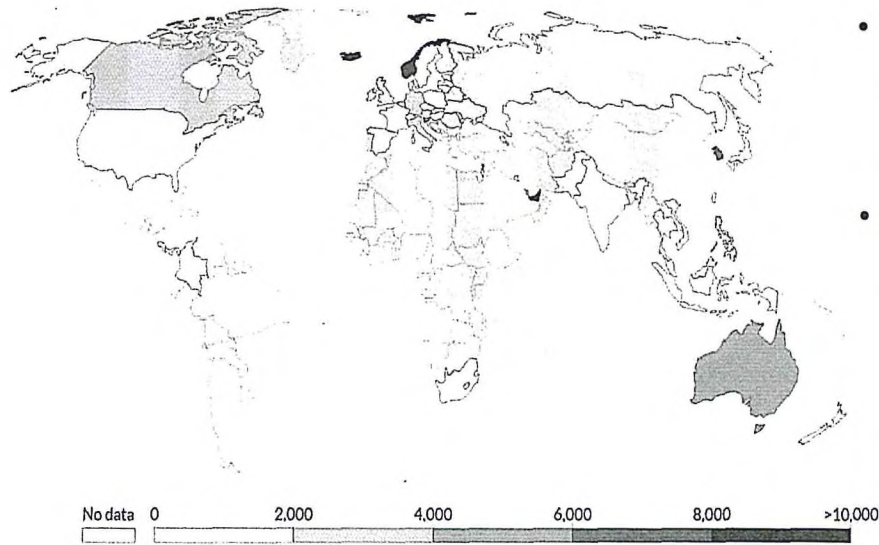
- Canada has tested a total of 98,824 Canadians
  - A total of 1,574 Canadians have tested positive for a per cent positivity of 1.6%.
- Testing volumes continue to increase as public health takes action to detect cases and control spread
- Canada is ramping up testing consistent with other countries like South Korea where high volume testing is part of effective control measures.

## International comparisons

### Total COVID-19 tests performed per million people

Most recent data as of 20 March [18.00GMT]. Data collected by Our World in Data from official country reports. For some countries the number of tests corresponds to the number of individuals who have been tested, rather than the number of samples.

Our World  
in Data



- Canada is testing approximate 2,600 per million compared with South Korea at approximately 6,000 per million population.
- Testing the right people, at the right time, and the right situation based on Canadian data is key.

Source: Our World in Data  
Note: Data for the United States corresponds to estimates from the COVID-Tracking Project.

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## Testing projections for Canada

- We are ramping up testing capacity targeting priority populations and vulnerable groups – this will result in targeted public health actions according to the state of the epidemic in jurisdictions.
- We are securing testing supplies to test millions of Canadians.
- Data from provinces and territories are essential to our readiness plan.
- We are carefully watching the experience in other countries to where the curve is flattening to inform our testing strategy.



## Testing supply

- Global shortages in testing supplies are affecting Canada's capacity.
- Near-term focus on accessing testing swabs and reagents; bulk procurement in progress to support provinces and territories.
- Alternative testing options in development will expand testing capacity by using non-health care facility testing sites (eg private laboratories).
  - Serology testing measures the antibody response to the virus and will tell us the state of immunity in the population.
- Canada is pro actively preparing through our testing procurement strategy to support ramp-up.



## Urgent Actions

- Working with provinces and territories on a coordinated approach to ramp up testing.
- Trouble shooting immediate provincial/territorial requirements requires these jurisdictions provide timely information on their supply issues.
- Also essential is timely case information from jurisdictions so the Federal Government can project COVID-19 cases and testing, and local public health authorities can undertake rapid contact tracing, tracking and actions such as self-isolation.
- With support of provinces and territories, public communication of Canada's testing strategy.