
Arizona Republic: Arizona Announces COVID-19 'Testing Blitz' Over The Next 3 Weekends

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Arizona Republic: Arizona Announces COVID-19 'Testing Blitz' Over The Next 3 Weekends

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[Arizona Republic](#)
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State officials announced Monday an “Arizona testing blitz” with the goal of testing 30,000 to 60,000 people over the next three weekends.

The plan is to test between 10,000 and 20,000 Arizonans for three consecutive Saturdays. The surge begins Saturday and will continue on May 9 and May 16.

The “blitz” is a partnership between Gov. Doug Ducey, the Arizona Department of Health Services and health care partners across the state. The goal is to expand COVID-19 testing across the state.

Testing will take place at drive-thru and onsite locations across the state. Testing locations, hours and registration information can be found at azhealth.gov/testingblitz.

Per the state’s new guidelines, testing will be available to anyone who thinks they’ve been exposed or could be infected, although each testing site may have their own additional criteria.

“Arizona has placed an emphasis on ramping up testing, but we need more,” Ducey said in a written statement. “The Arizona Testing Blitz is just one step of many that will expand access to testing for Arizonans and provide us with better data to develop Arizona specific solutions and re-energize our economy.”

Testing operations such as Banner Health and Walgreens have already signed up to participate. Other interested health care providers and testers can sign up by emailing HEOC@azdhs.gov.

Testing has been criticized previously

To date, Arizona’s private and state labs have performed a total of 66,543 tests as of Monday.

But many experts and epidemiologists have argued that's nowhere near enough to understand the true spread of the disease and to plan for re-opening the state economy. Arizona consistently has ranked among the bottom states in tests per 1 million residents.

Some have said that Arizona needs to collect 100,000 tests every month to fully understand the spread enough to safely reopen.

Until this past Thursday, state guidelines were strict in terms of who could get tested. In late March, the health department urged primary care providers to consider avoiding testing if possible and instead use other "diagnostic tools" as demand for tests outpaced supplies.

Now anyone who thinks they could be infected with COVID-19 or who has been exposed to it can get tested.

Banner Health opens at Fairgrounds

Banner Health, Arizona's largest health system, opened an additional testing location this week at the Arizona State Fairgrounds. The new location is the system's largest testing operation and can accommodate individuals without cars.

Anyone experiencing symptoms or with concerns of possible exposure can get tested through Banner.

Individuals interested in getting tested can call Banner Health at 844-549-1851 for a screening and to schedule an appointment. Individuals who arrive without an appointment will not get tested unless they call and complete the phone screening process.

This new location is in addition to Banner's drive-thru test sites in the northwest Valley, the southeast Valley, Mesa and Tucson.

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