



COVID-19 Pooled Saliva Surveillance Testing Plan FAQs



Elevation Health designs and implements assurance testing protocols for businesses, schools, families and cultural organizations throughout New York City.

Pooled Saliva COVID-19 testing

Questions have been divided into three categories:

What is Pool Testing?

How Will Testing Happen?

Questions about the Results

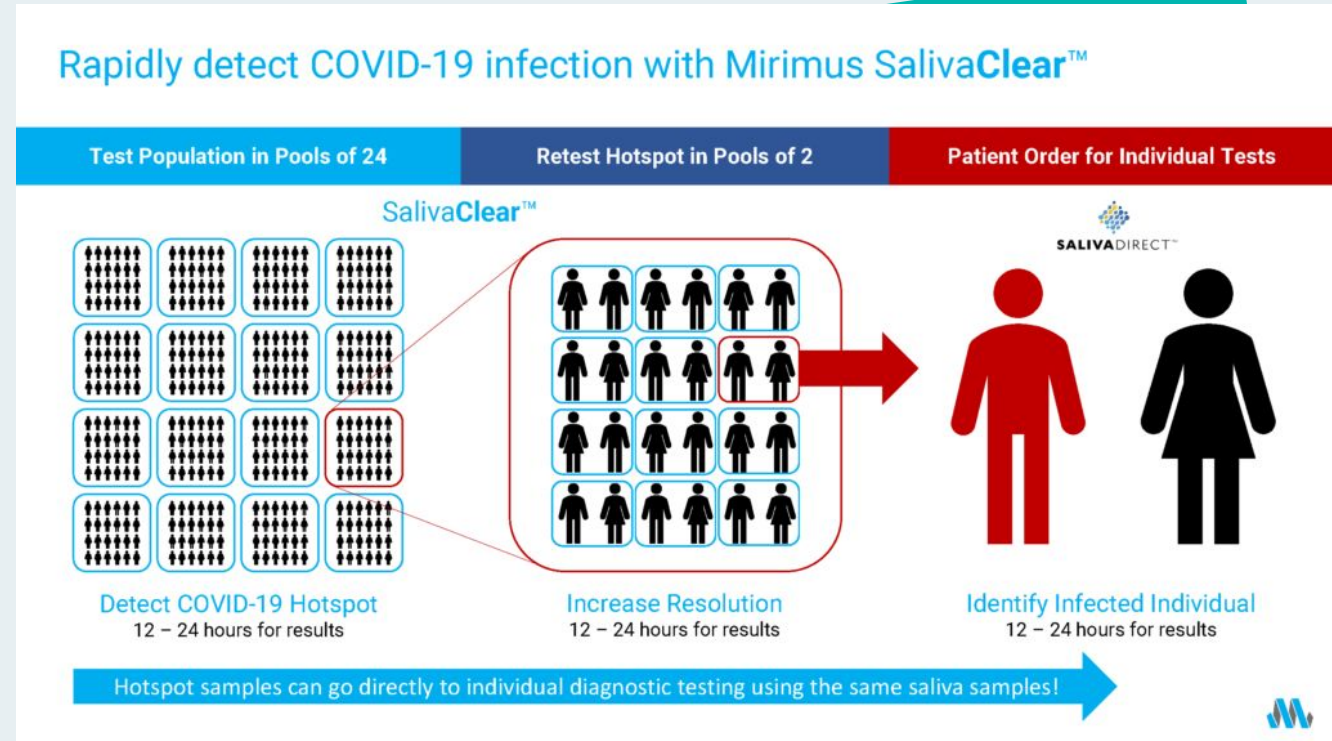
What is Pool Testing?

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Rather than test each individual faculty and student separately, which is a time and resource intensive process, samples will be combined—or **pooled**—to cut down on the number of tests.

We are partnering with Mirimus Labs to conduct the pooled testing, while utilizing a method designed by Yale University's Office of Cooperative Research (currently being used by the NBA).

In this case, we will be using saliva. If one person within a pool of 24 saliva samples tests positive, the entire pool is flagged as positive and reflex testing is enacted immediately to discern which individual(s) within the pool was the positive case.



Why is St. Luke's using COVID-19 pool testing?

Pool testing can identify and isolate asymptomatic carriers of the COVID-19 virus, thus enhancing the health and safety of those teaching and learning in-person at St. Luke's.

This method will enable us to minimize the presence of the COVID-19 virus on our campus and maximize our ability to continue in-person learning.

We will continue to monitor and maintain all CDC health and safety recommended protocols.

How reliable is the test?

Based on efficacy studies conducted to date by Mirimus, pool test protocols detect the existence of the COVID-19 virus as well as it can be detected via an individual COVID-19 test but at a fraction of the cost, thus providing an opportunity for St. Luke's School to regularly test their faculty and students.

Please remember that any negative test, and especially a pooled 24 sample test, does not definitively always imply that there is no virus in the individual's system. For example, soon after infection the body is not shedding virus, so it is neither infectious or easily detectable by a test.

Other factors can also affect the presence of the virus in the sample. Even with a negative result everyone should abide by the recommended health practices such as mask wearing, physical distancing, and hand washing.

Is there a potential for false positives?

False positives are possible but very rare. The test utilized by Mirimus detects three different unique viral RNA templates. For a positive result, at least two RNA templates must be detected. The protocols used substantially decrease false positives created by detecting dead viral particles.

How is user privacy ensured?

At St. Luke's, the barcode corresponding to the sample will be connected with an individual's name.

This information is not transferred to Mirimus.

Therefore, the data portal that will be used meets and exceeds all HIPAA privacy protections afforded every individual since no Protected Health Information (PHI) will be shared.

Your saliva samples will be used for COVID-19 testing only. Individuals can only access their own results.

Only approved St. Luke's administrators will be able to view all pool results.

How Will Testing Happen?

How does the testing process work? (Slide 1)

Step 1. Faculty and students will receive a clean, individual testing kit containing a barcoded sample collection tube and additional supplies (e.g., alcohol wipes for sanitizing after sample collection).

Step 2. Faculty and students will bring the saliva collection kits home where they will self-collect saliva samples.

Please review the saliva kit description and sample collection instructions on the following two slides.

Do not use mouthwash for at least 2 hours prior to providing your sample. Do not eat, drink, chew gum, or brush your teeth at least 30 minutes prior to providing your sample. This is critical to the viability of the sample collected.

How does the testing process work? (Slide 2)

The Saliva Collection Kit

Please refer to the instructions outlined here for an overview of the three steps:

1. Pick up the saliva kit
2. Collect Saliva at home
3. Drop off kit the following day

What is included with the collection kit?



Saliva Collection Tube



Saliva Straw



Alcohol Wipe



Tube Bag

How does the testing process work? (Slide 3)

What tips do you have for saliva sample collection?

Saliva sample self-collection is simple, non-invasive, and safe



Step 1
Open saliva straw pouch and remove saliva straw.



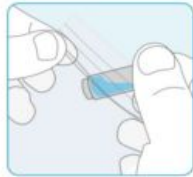
Step 2
Unscrew tube cap and insert ridged end of saliva straw into tube.



Step 3
Pool saliva in mouth and push saliva through straw into tube until half full.



Step 4
Remove and discard saliva straw and securely cap tube.



Step 5
Wipe tube with alcohol wipe, place into tube bag and seal.



Step 6
Return tube to sample collection manager.

Here is a short [training video of the saliva collection process.](#)

How does the testing process work? (Slide 4)

Step 3. Faculty and students will return their barcoded collection tubes to designated St. Luke's personnel when they arrive on site.

Step 4. The same day, the collected samples will be couriered to the lab for testing. The lab will then test the samples using "pooled testing," meaning the lab will group individual samples into batches of approximately 24. A small amount of each individual sample in the batch will be mixed together to create a combined pooled sample.

If COVID-19 is not detected in the combined pooled sample, no further action is required.

If COVID-19 is detected in the combined pooled sample, the lab will conduct additional testing to narrow down which sample(s) were positive.

Due to current regulations regarding observed sample collection for individual diagnostics, the specificity with which Mirimus is allowed to report is limited to a pair of samples (i.e., a sample containing a mix of two saliva samples). The barcodes associated with that pair of saliva samples will be reported to the designated St. Luke's administrators.

Submitted saliva samples are only used for COVID-19 testing, and all saliva samples are destroyed by the lab after one week.

How does the testing process work? (Slide 5)

Step 5. St. Luke's staff will reach out to the individuals associated with **COVID-19 Detected** pairs.

Both individuals in the pair are considered potentially positive for COVID-19.

In an abundance of caution, both will be required to isolate and participate in contact tracing protocols.

Any additional individuals identified as having had meaningful close contact with the potentially positive COVID-19 cases will be required to quarantine until further investigation.