

# Public Health Advisory

## Rapid antigen test solutions hazardous if ingested, exposed to skin

**March 11, 2022**

## Iqaluit, Nunavut

The Department of Health is warning Nunavummiut of the dangers of misusing rapid antigen self-tests. The Public Health Agency of Canada issued the warning after an increase in reports to poison control centres due to accidental ingestion or spillage of COVID-19 rapid antigen test kit solutions on the skin.

The danger comes from chemicals, such as sodium azide and Proclin, in the liquid solutions that may be poisonous if swallowed or absorbed through the skin, particularly in children and pets. Small doses of sodium azide can lower blood pressure, and larger doses may cause more serious health effects. Proclin contains chemicals that can cause skin and eye irritation, as well as allergic reactions.

When used properly the kits are considered safe by Health Canada.

### How to use rapid antigen tests safely:

- Keep rapid antigen test kits and solutions out of the reach of children and pets.
- Do not swallow the solutions and avoid eye and skin contact.
- Wash hands thoroughly after use.
- If spillage occurs, rinse well with water.
- Follow all instructions for proper disposal.
- Report any health product-related side effects or complaints to Health Canada.
- Contact your local health centre in cases of accidental ingestion or direct skin exposure to test kit solutions.

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