



COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping you informed

Blue Shield of California continues to adhere to state and federal requirements regarding coverage of COVID-19 testing and vaccinations. Variation between state and federal requirements, and continually-evolving guidance, may cause for confusion to members and plan-sponsors alike when it comes to testing coverage.

We've developed this [testing.grid](#) which reflects some differences in testing coverage based on lines of business to help you and your clients make informed decisions.

Here are some COVID-19 testing fundamentals to know:

- Following [guidance issued by the Biden Administration](#) on January 10, 2022, Blue Shield will provide coverage for up to eight at-home COVID-19 tests each month for personal use that are purchased on or after January 15, 2022. We will cover these tests without cost-sharing, medical management, or prior authorization for members in individual and group health plans.
- Blue Shield of California does not have direct coverage or a preferred pharmacy for COVID-19 at-home test kits at this time. Members can purchase test kits at a retailer of their choice and submit for reimbursement of the full amount shown on their receipt.
- Information for member reimbursement can be found [here](#) on our member site.
- Under the federal FFCRA CARES Act, at-home COVID-19 tests must be purchased by the participant, beneficiary, or enrollee for personal use, and not for employment purposes nor resale.
- SB 510 provides broader coverage to include testing coverage for screening purposes, such as for employment, school, or travel. Final guidance from DMHC is still pending.

- The federal government is providing every home in the U.S. four free at-home COVID-19 tests. Ordering and information is available at www.covidtests.gov/.

Other COVID-19 updates:

- **Oral antiviral medications**

In December 2021, the FDA provided emergency use authorization (EUA) for two oral antiviral prescription (Rx) medications to treat COVID-19, Pfizer's paxlovid and Merck and Ridgeback Biotherapeutics' molnupiravir. These medications can be prescribed for high-risk adult and pediatric COVID-19 patients to help treat the symptoms of COVID-19. Paxlovid and molnupiravir will be covered benefits for Blue Shield and Blue Shield Promise members who have mild-to-moderate COVID-19 and are prescribed the medications by a healthcare provider. Members will not have a cost share.

- **Supreme Court blocks OSHA testing and vaccination mandate for large private employers**

The vaccine mandate still stands for health care workers in medical facilities that take Medicare and Medicaid payments. Vaccine mandate for federal contractors and subcontractors is not yet enforced, and is under further appellate review.

- **Public Health Emergency is extended** through April 15, 2022.

We will keep you informed of clarifications and/or changes to COVID-19 testing coverage and will continue to follow state and federal requirements. Additional information is available for brokers and group plan sponsors at group.blueshieldca.com/covid-19/, and member information is available at www.blueshieldca.com/coronavirus.

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