



## **Dietitians and COVID-19 Testing FAQs**

### **Can Dietitians do specimen collection (ie. swabs) to test for COVID-19?**

Yes, with appropriate employer policies/procedures in place dietitians in Saskatchewan who receive employer provided training/support are able to perform specimen collection for COVID-19 testing as an optimization of their scope of practice.

Dietitians in other Canadian provinces have safely been doing specimen collection for COVID-19 testing for many months. The basic training for dietitians provides a foundational knowledge of anatomy, physical assessment, infection control and basic dysphagia assessment/treatment. This, supplemented with employer provided training and support will allow dietitians to safely perform specimen collection for COVID-19 testing during the pandemic.

### **What employer policies/procedures are required?**

Employers should have a process or medical directive in place to authorize the collection of specimens to test for COVID-19 with detailed procedures for the actual specimen collection. Employers should also have the individual dietitians named on the lab licence/permit for the testing center. Employers can contact Medical Services Branch of the Ministry with inquiries related to lab licensing (Phone: 306-787-7988 and Email: LabLicensing@health.gov.sk.ca).

Dietitians should confirm with employers that they will have coverage under the employer's professional liability policy specific to specimen collection for COVID-19 testing. Although SDA does not provide or sell professional liability insurance we can help employers navigate questions specific to dietetic scope of practice which may impact whether or not there is coverage (Phone: 306-359-3040 and Email: registrar@saskdietitians.org).

### **Does this mean I will automatically be deployed or recruited to do specimen collection?**

It is at the discretion of the employer to determine when and how dietitians get deployed or recruited. There are many roles which need to be filled as part of the provincial COVID-19 response.

Once the appropriate employer policies/procedure and permit are in place (see above), it will be at the discretion of the site manager for the testing center (ie. lab) to identify which groups of clients are appropriate for that individual dietitian to do specimen collection on.

### **What kind of training will I get?**

Dietitians will receive employer provided training and they should retain evidence of completion. Dietitians should reach out to the site manager or clinical standards if issues arise and/or they feel they need more training and support.

For more information on professional accountability during the pandemic, click [here](#).

For the SDA Decision Tool for New Tasks/Aspects of Dietetic Practice, click [here](#).