

Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department

Web: health.hamiltontn.org



****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

June 16, 2021

Chattanooga Nears Finish Line of At-Home COVID-19 Testing Challenge Thanks to Remarkable Community Participation

As free test kit distribution comes to a close, Say Yes! COVID Test urges Chattanooga residents to keep testing three times a week to decrease COVID-19 spread

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN — The Hamilton County Health Department's [Say Yes! COVID Test](#) At-Home Testing Challenge is nearing the homestretch with more than 32,000 free test kits in the hands of community members. Local and national leaders are sending messages of thanks and encouragement to keep testing for a strong close out of the effort.

"It has been inspiring to see Chattanooga residents from every walk of life come together to support and participate in Say Yes! COVID Test," said Dr. Fernando Urrego, Interim Health Officer of the Hamilton County Health Department. "To everyone who participated, delivered test kits, answered questions or urged a neighbor to join the challenge, I want to say a heartfelt thank you on behalf of the entire community. We are almost at the finish line, so let's keep the momentum going — don't stop testing three times a week until all tests are used to keep Hamilton County healthy!"

[Similar recognition](#) has come in from leaders across the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), community partners, and researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, who are all part of the cooperative Say Yes! COVID Test effort to determine if testing will slow the spread of COVID-19.

Through May and June, Say Yes! COVID Test has provided households within Chattanooga and the greater Hamilton County access to free, rapid COVID-19 test kits that residents can self-administer three times a week to identify the infection early and reduce community spread. A limited number of test kits are still available until June 20. Visit www.covidtestchattanooga.org or call the Health Department's COVID-19 hotline at 423-209-8383 to order a test kit or find a local pickup location.

Chattanooga residents who already have their test kits are invited to join an optional research study to complete surveys and earn up to \$50 in gift cards. The optional research study aims to understand if the Say Yes! COVID Test Challenge fostered behavior to prevent the spread of COVID-19, increased knowledge about COVID-19, or affected decisions about COVID-19 vaccination.

Once test kit distribution concludes, Say Yes! COVID Test will [compare publicly available data](#) in Chattanooga with data from other communities of similar size that have not received widespread self-administered tests to determine if mass at-home testing successfully decreased COVID-19 spread. Results are expected in the fall of 2021. For more information on the optional study, or to view study results this fall, please visit www.covidtestchattanooga.org.

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