

Antigen Tests Key to the Next Phase of Reopening



Talk to your pharmacist for advice on how and when to use antigen tests

27 October 2021 The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) has said the appropriate use of antigen tests could be key to the next phase of Ireland's reopening. The government has revised its recommendations on the use of the tests, which the IPU has welcomed. However, the IPU has warned that it is essential that people source and administer the tests appropriately.

Speaking about the role of antigen tests, IPU President and community pharmacist, Dermot Twomey said, "Last week saw the lifting of many restrictions and we now move into what everyone hopes will be the final phase of the pandemic. In the weeks and months ahead, it will be vital for everyone to take a more individual sense of responsibility and antigen tests offer an opportunity to do so."

"The advice remains clear, if you have symptoms you must book for a PCR test. However, antigen tests can provide an extra layer of protection. Individuals who know they are due to attend an event, visit a vulnerable family member, or simply return to their office, can avail of the reassurance of an antigen test. They also provide the benefit of very rapid results."

Antigen tests are readily available in pharmacies nationwide. However, with the FDA in America having recently issued a warning about counterfeit antigen tests, Mr Twomey has warned against purchasing antigen tests from less reputable locations. "Antigen tests are a medical device and, just as with any medicine, by purchasing the tests from your local pharmacy you can be sure of their quality."

Dermot Twomey also urged that the correct usage instructions are followed, "Antigen tests can only be relied upon if administered correctly. Your pharmacist can provide you with information about how to do so when you purchase your test. Pharmacists will be familiar with latest public health guidelines so will be aware of when these products are appropriate for use and when a person should be referred for a PCR test. They can also advise people on the next steps should they receive a positive result in the antigen test."

Mr Twomey concluded by reiterating that antigen tests should never be seen as a substitute for

following public health guidelines. “It is important that everyone continues to follow all relevant Government and HSE advice regarding Covid-19. However, antigen tests available in pharmacies complement existing measures and can provide added reassurance as society continues to reopen.”

ENDS