

Hostel residents at four universities to get free testing

✓ **NG KENG GENE**

Residents staying in hostels at four autonomous universities here will be offered a one-time free Covid-19 test next month.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) said the testing is for residents at the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore Management University (SMU) and the Singapore University of Technology and Design.

The decision was made “in view of the high-density, communal living environment that may pose increased risk of community transmission”, said MOE, which strongly encouraged students to get tested.

An MOE spokesman said there are no plans to extend testing to all staff and students, and that the Education and Health Ministries may consider doing so in future.

Both NTU and SMU told students via e-mail or online circulars that antigen rapid tests will be used and those who test positive will undergo a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. Antigen rapid tests can produce results in about 15 to 30 minutes, unlike PCR tests that usually take a day or two.

Second-year NUS student Tay Jia Shern, who stays in a residential college, felt that the free test was a good initiative to give students the assurance that no asymptomatic or undetected Covid-19 cases were among them.

MOE also said the move is part of efforts to expand Covid-19 testing to selected community groups.

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