

NYC clinics set to start 'self-swab' coronavirus tests

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Alex Poam, left, sells gloves to a customer on a street corner in Manhattan, New York, Sunday, April 26, 2020. Poam is studying to be a computer and network technician; after taking online classes most mornings he sells PPE to pedestrians to support himself. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

New York City-run health clinics will soon take a new tack on coronavirus testing, using a procedure that lets people collect samples themselves at a health care worker's direction, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Monday.

He said the "self-swab" tests would allow for more and easier testing and make it safer for [test](#)-seekers and health care workers alike.

"This is something we're going to start using aggressively because it will be better for everyone," the Democrat said.

Up to this point, testing has mainly been done by health care workers inserting a swab deep into a person's nostrils. The feeling often makes someone sneeze or cough while the health care professional is right there, city Health and Hospitals President Dr. Mitchell Katz said.

The new method is set to start within the next few days at eight community testing sites around the city. The process will work like this: A health care worker will explain how to administer the test, and then the person would go into another area, take a nasal swab and spit into a cup for a second sample for cross-checking. The samples will then be given to a health care [worker](#) and tested.

De Blasio said the method would allow health care workers and test-seekers to keep more distance; reduce the need to devote [health care workers](#) to administering tests, and allow the clinics to administer as many as 20 tests an hour, instead of 15.

So far, more than 5,000 people have been tested at the city-run community sites since April 17.

The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people. For some, especially [older adults](#) and people with existing [health](#)

[problems](#), it can cause more severe illness or death.

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