



Advertisement

Politics

Federal

Coronavirus pandemic

COVID-19 sparks at-home HIV test revolution

Tom McIlroy *Political reporter*



Nov 1, 2021 - 10.26am



[Demand for rapid COVID-19 testing kits](#) has sped up the use of at-home HIV testing technology, with the first kit approved by the medical regulator to be sold over the counter at pharmacies.

Atomo Diagnostics has been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration to supply its finger prick testing kit chemists and other approved businesses, and to advertise the product to people seeking to check their HIV status.



Atomo Diagnostics founder John Kelly with the company's testing kit. **Kate Geraghty**

Advocates including the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations say the change in strict federal rules represents a major step forward for HIV awareness around the country.

Atomo founder John Kelly said the decision would improve access to the product for people in need and help public health.

“I think the changes bring HIV into line with COVID-19 because obviously the pandemic came along and reset the expectation about home testing and consumer testing. The TGA acknowledged that HIV was an outlier,” Dr Kelly told *The Australian Financial Review*.

“There has been an attempt, I believe, to even out the restriction across the board for different types of infectious disease tests.”

Lockdowns and restrictions in 2020 and 2021 saw reduced rates of some medical tests, including for HIV. Atomo was supported by the Pharmacy Guild and other groups in arguing lower testing rates meant action was needed from federal regulators.

“I think it speaks to an alignment of community interests and I am very happy as an Australian manufacturer to be able to continue to support the market, even though there have been restrictions.

“Now we can hopefully start to improve testing rates in Australia,” Dr Kelly said.

Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations chief executive Darryl O’Donnell said the sale and promotion of self-test HIV kits was an important step forward.

He said the rule change would help give people seeking a test on their HIV status greater choice and access.

“While stigma and discrimination are easing they still present barriers for many people knowing their status. Being able to administer a finger prick test in the comfort of your own home will encourage more people to test for HIV,” Mr O’Donnell said.

“There is compelling Australian research to show self tests will increase testing among people who need to test and don’t, as well as those who test infrequently.

“This is a critical step to meet the goal of ending HIV transmission.

“It will directly assist efforts to increase the number of people living with HIV who are diagnosed, allowing them to seek treatment and suppress their viral load.”

At-home testing kits for COVID-19 tests are on sale in Australian chemists and convenience stores from this week, after the rapid antigen kits were [approved for use by the TGA in September.](#)

Already widely used in countries including the US and the UK, online retailers are selling COVID-19 tests for \$19.95, and supermarket giants Coles and Woolworths will stock the kits from this week.

Atomo's COVID-19 test takes 10 minutes to return a result.

The NSW government is trialling rapid antigen tests to reduce disruption in schools, part of efforts to cut the isolation period for close contacts of confirmed cases.



RELATED

Rapid COVID-19 testing is coming to a workplace near you

The rapid test kits use samples from the throat and nose placed in a chemical solution and applied to a cartridge, similar to those used in some pregnancy test kits.

The biggest stories in business, markets and politics and why they matter.

Need to know. Our daily reporting, in your inbox.

[SIGN UP NOW](#)

Tom McIlroy reports from the federal press gallery at Parliament House. *Connect with Tom on [Twitter](#). Email Tom at thomas.mcilroy@afrc.com*

Save

Share

License article

READ MORE

[Coronavirus pandemic](#)



[HIV](#)



LATEST STORIES

[Subscriber offers](#)

Subscriber Discount Offer - Re-emerge 2022

4 mins ago

[Big four](#)

Westpac shares plunge on cost pressures despite \$3.5b share buyback

10 mins ago

[Street Talk](#)

Wastewater solutions company SciDev raising \$20 million

21 mins ago

[Property market](#)

House prices to peak by mid-next year: AMP

22 mins ago

SPONSORED

Australia faces wave of cyber attacks

Sponsored
by Mandiant

The effects of COVID-19 on Australia's business sector

Sponsored
by Xero

LATEST IN FEDERAL

Live [Need to Know](#)

Berejiklian 'never suspected' Maguire of corrupt conduct

1 hr ago | Tom McIlroy



[AUKUS](#)

'I don't think, I know': Macron brands Morrison a liar

Nov 1, 2021 | Phillip Coorey



Glasgow summit

Act now to limit net zero 2050 risk to business: EY

Nov 1, 2021 | Tom McLlroy



Coronavirus pandemic

Australia welcomes Kiwis on Monday, Singaporeans later in November

Oct 31, 2021 | Tom McLlroy



Climate policy

G20 waters down 2050 pledge

Oct 31, 2021 | Phillip Coorey and Hans van Leeuwen

MOST VIEWED IN POLITICS

- 1 Barnaby Joyce opposed his party's decision on net zero
- 2 NBN Co, Australia Post pay nearly \$300m in pandemic bonuses
- 3 The Nationals break new ground for economic extortion
- 4 Maguire was a 'pain in the arse': Barilaro
- 5 Pandemic 'not over' warns Perrottet, as case numbers stop falling
- 6 Australia Post spends \$400m to boost COVID-19 parcel boom

THE AUSTRALIAN
Financial Review Magazine

At home with 'the godfather of postmodernism' in London

Stephen Todd



How to make a new restaurant's 'perfect summer weekend dish' at home

This wine business has a knack for knowing your next favourite drink

BOSS

Former Nike executive to take RM Williams to the world



Sally Patten

Meet the 29-year-old acting CEO of RM Williams

Four tips that will make you thrive like a CEO in tough times

Life & Leisure

Fashion from landfill? Australian designers say it's the future



20 mins ago | Lauren Sams

Peek inside a luxury penthouse that comes with its own forest

Farm-to-arm fashion takes off with M.J. Bale's first net zero suit

RICH LIST

Is fortune written in the stars? Check the Young Rich Lister horoscope



1 hr ago

Listen now: What it takes to make the Rich List

Meet this year's 26 new Young Rich Listers

MY ACCOUNT 

SUBSCRIBE 

ABOUT US 

CONTACT 

MAGAZINES 

COLUMNS 

MARKETS DATA 

LISTS 

EVENTS 

OUR NETWORK 

TERMS AND CONDITIONS 
