

Rapid Antigen Testing price lowered following Competition Commission investigation

South Africa's big three pathology groups, Pathcare, Lancet and Ampath, are expected to lower the price of Covid-19 Rapid Antigen tests to no more than R150 per test.



Image source: shutter_speed from [Pexels](#)

This after a Competition Commission investigation found that the three groups may have contravened the Competition Act, which prohibits dominant companies from charging excessive prices to the detriment of consumers.

The commission's investigation was triggered by a complaint from the National Health Department, which alleged that a test kit bought through UNICEF costs only R50 - implying that the three companies may have been overpricing.

The companies were charging at least R350, with prices dropping to R250 during November.

Commissioner Tembinkosi Bonakele said the move is a further victory for consumers if taken in the context of last week's announcement that Covid-19 PCR tests will now cost no more than R500.

“This is yet another major victory for South Africans, particularly the vulnerable groups during the time of a devastating and resilient pandemic. The reduction of Covid-19 Rapid Antigen test prices will help alleviate the plight of consumers, and widen accessibility and affordability of Covid-19 Rapid Antigen testing, which is a critical part of the initiatives to avoid the escalation of the pandemic,” he said.

Rapid Antigen Tests give quicker Covid-19 results than Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests.

Bonakele said the commission is also investigating the cost of Rapid Antigen Testing at retail pharmacy chain Dis-Chem.

“The Commission will continue with its investigation on supply and delivery of Covid-19 Rapid Antigen tests. We will not hesitate to apply for maximum administrative penalties against companies found guilty of exploiting consumers and customers,” he said.

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