

ART kits sold out at some retailers; stocks being replenished

Osmond Chia

Antigen rapid test (ART) kits are in short supply in certain places in Singapore, with some pharmacies and retailers reporting that their stocks have sold out amid a spike in daily coronavirus cases, which have crossed 1,000 in the past week.

But distributors here said there is no reason to panic-buy the kits, as there is adequate stock available locally.

At least six retailers in Toa Payoh Central, VivoCity and Bukit Panjang had run out of ART kits when The Straits Times visited yesterday.

Demand for the kits has increased almost fivefold in recent weeks, spokesmen for Guardian and Watsons, two major health retail chains here, said in response to queries from The Straits Times.

Both said that they were working with suppliers to bring in more stock. The Guardian spokesman said more stock will be available this week and assured customers that there are sufficient test kits.

[HIGH DEMAND continued on A2](#)



This Unity pharmacy outlet at VivoCity was among the places that were out of antigen rapid test kits yesterday when The Straits Times visited. But distributors said there is no need to panic-buy the kits as there is enough stock available in Singapore. ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH



Demand for kits has been very high: Distributors

FROM A1

FairPrice is working with the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) to ensure sufficient supplies and a wider selection of kits to meet demand that has doubled in the past week, said its spokesman.

Distributors here told ST there is enough stock in their warehouses.

Mr Wayne Yap, the director of pharmaceutical company Unison Collaborative, said demand for test kits has been “very high” and that it has been restocking retail outlets continually.

The company distributes test kits from Abbott Panbio, one of six brands authorised by HSA.

Ms Jes Lim, managing director of SPD Scientific, another distributor, said the company received a high volume of orders for test kits from retailers and corporations.

She said that it is able to replenish stock with retailers and is working with manufacturers to meet the surge in demand.

When asked about test kits running out at pharmacies, Singapore’s director of medical services Kenneth Mak said: “We actually have a lot of test kits, but I think it is just an issue of supply, distribution



A sign at Watsons in VivoCity yesterday indicating that the outlet was out of antigen rapid test kits. The surge in demand for such test kits comes after Singapore ramped up self-testing efforts to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission in the community. ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH

and allocation.” He was speaking at the Singaporean Researchers Global Summit at Nanyang Technological University yesterday.

The surge in demand comes after Singapore ramped up self-testing efforts to reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

Test kits have been issued to all households, primary and preschool pupils and selected sectors to slow community spread.

Buyers could purchase only up to 10 kits at a time when they were made available at retail pharmacies in June. But the cap was lifted

when sales were extended to supermarkets and convenience stores in July.

osmondc@sph.com.sg

• Additional reporting by Isabelle Liew