

Walmart expands drone program with COVID-19 test-kit delivery

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Walmart Inc. will test using drones to drop COVID-19 diagnostic kits at customers' homes, the retailer's latest move in the pandemic-fueled arena of contactless deliveries.

The company is piloting [drone delivery](#) of at-home coronavirus self-

collection kits in North Las Vegas and Cheektowaga, New York, it said in a blog post Tuesday. It's partnering with Quest Diagnostics Inc. and DroneUp, a Virginia-based [drone](#) services provider that works across various industries.

There's no customer cost for the service, which delivers nasal swab kits to patients living within one mile of the local Walmart supercenter in those two markets. The kits include pre-paid shipping labels to send the samples back to Quest.

The goal of the experiment is to "shape contactless testing capabilities on a larger scale," said Tom Ward, Walmart's senior vice president of customer product.

This marks Walmart's third drone trial in as many weeks, as it looks to catch up to rival Amazon.com Inc. Earlier this month, it began testing deliveries of groceries and [household items](#) from stores in Fayetteville, N.C., and last week it teamed with a company called Zipline to deliver health and wellness products to customers near its Arkansas headquarters. Amazon recently won regulatory approval to transport packages by drone, but isn't yet using them at scale.

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