



Lateral Flow Testing

Background

Around one in three people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and will be spreading it without realising it.

Widening community testing to those showing no symptoms (called 'asymptomatic'), will help find people who are infected and infectious but unaware that they might be spreading the virus.

Community testing is now being offered to all residents. It is also being deployed for the management of local Covid-19 outbreaks.

Breaking the Covid chain is so important to stop the virus from spreading and we urge residents to play their part by getting into the habit of twice-weekly testing. The test used is called a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) and it delivers the results within 45 minutes.

Frequently Asked Questions

1	Who are we testing?	All residents without symptoms.
2	Why are we testing?	<p>We are aiming to identify people who do not have Covid-19 symptoms, but who are infectious and could spread the infection to others unknowingly.</p> <p>Identifying and supporting infectious people without symptoms to isolate will help reduce spread.</p>
3	Who cannot be tested?	<p>You cannot be tested if you have Covid symptoms.</p> <p>If you have symptoms (new continuous cough, high temperature, loss or change to your sense of taste or smell) you must get a PCR test by booking a test through the national website (https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or by calling 119.</p> <p>You cannot be tested if you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are self-isolating after a positive Covid test

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are a contact of someone who has had a positive Covid test in the last 10 days <p>If you fit either of the above criteria, you must complete the full 10-day isolation period.</p>
4	How does the test work?	<p>You are required to swab your own throat and nose, supervised by a trained member of our staff.</p> <p>Full instructions are provided to you.</p>
5	How long does it take to do the test?	<p>It takes just a few minutes to do the test, but we provide 15-minute testing slots.</p>
6	How long does it take to get the result?	<p>You should receive your result about 45 minutes after your test.</p>
7	How do I receive my result?	<p>You will receive your result from NHS Test and Trace via text message or email (or by phone if you do not have a mobile or internet).</p>
8	What happens if I test positive?	<p>If you test positive, you must self-isolate immediately and book in for a confirmatory PCR test through the Gov.uk website. This is so positive cases can be traced sooner and will help stop the spread of variants in the UK.</p> <p>Self-isolation lasts for 10 days – that means not leaving the house for any reason. Everyone you live with will be a ‘close contact’ and must also self-isolate for 10 days.</p> <p>If your confirmatory PCR test is taken with two days of the lateral flow test, and the result comes back as negative, you will be notified that you no longer need to self-isolate. If the confirmatory test comes back as positive, or is not done within the two-day timeframe, you will need to self-isolate for the full 10-day period.</p>
9	What happens if I test negative?	<p>If your test result is negative, you must continue to follow social distancing guidelines, wear a mask and regularly wash your hands.</p> <p>If you test negative today but later experience Covid-19 symptoms (new continuous cough, high temperature, loss or change to your sense of taste or smell) then you must get a PCR test (instructions above), not a lateral flow test.</p>
10	Invalid test	<p>Very occasionally, a test will not process correctly. If this does occur, you will be contacted to take another test.</p>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

11	How often should I have a test?	It is recommended that you have a lateral flow test twice a week, with three days minimum between each test.
12	Do I need to attend the same site for each test?	No. You can choose to book or turn up at whichever site is most convenient to you.
13	What happens if I develop Covid-like symptoms between my tests?	<p>If at any point you develop Covid-19 symptoms, you should book a PCR test, not a lateral flow test (instructions above).</p> <p>These tests are available at walk-in and drive-through testing sites, rather than in these symptom-free testing centres.</p>
14	What is the lateral flow testing technology?	<p>Lateral flow antigen tests are a new kind of technology that can be used to test a higher number of people without Covid-19 symptoms, without the need for a lab. This helps us to identify and isolate more people who may spread the virus and break the chain of transmission.</p> <p>A lateral flow test detects the presence or absence of Covid-19 from a swab sample. The sample is mixed with a buffer solution, which releases and breaks up virus fragments.</p>
15	What will this test tell me?	<p>If you get a positive result, it is likely that you were infectious at the time the test was taken. The antigen test cannot detect very low levels of Covid-19 in a sample, so if you have only recently been infected, are in the incubation period, or if you have mostly recovered, the test may not give a positive result.</p> <p>If you test negative, you may still have the virus and therefore need to take every precaution. You must continue to follow social distancing guidelines, wear a mask in public and regularly wash your hands.</p>
16	Are lateral flow tests less accurate than PCR tests?	<p>Lateral flow and PCR tests have different characteristics and different uses. PCR tests are more sensitive but need to be processed in a laboratory, which means it takes longer to get the results.</p> <p>Lateral flow tests work well when the person has a high viral load (a lot of the virus in their system). Lateral flow tests will detect new Covid-19 variants.</p>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

17	Can we test children?	Only children aged 16 and over may attend a test site.
18	What if throat swabbing is proving difficult?	Where throat swabbing is difficult, nasal swabbing (both nostrils) can also be used.
19	If I test negative, does this mean I can ignore social distancing rules?	<p>No. It is very important to understand why lateral flow tests are used in the way that they are. They should not be used as a diagnostic tool and should only be used to test asymptomatic people.</p> <p>Alongside this, a negative LFT result does not give you immunity and should not be used as an excuse to bend the rules under current Covid-19 restrictions. This is very important as you could put others at severe risk.</p>
20	How can I be sure that the workforce at the testing centre are not Covid-19 positive?	Before the start of each shift, the workforce will test each other using the lateral flow tests in order to ensure no staff members are positive. Should someone test positive they will leave the test site immediately and self-isolate.
21	Do I have to take this test?	No. However, we are hoping that many people will recognise the benefits of getting involved in twice-weekly testing to reduce the spread of the virus and protect other members of society.