Your step-by-step guide for COVID-19 self-testing

This guide explains how to test yourself or another person for COVID-19, and self-report results to the NHS.

Get more help at **www.gov.uk/covid19-self-test-help** including demonstration videos and instructions in alternative languages.

Read this whole guide carefully before you start the test.

About this test

Many people with COVID-19 have mild, or even no symptoms, but can still spread the virus. With regular self- testing we can slow the spread and help protect the most vulnerable in our families and communities.

The DHSC's COVID-19 Self-Test (Rapid Antigen Test) is a swab test to check for transmissible coronavirus (COVID-19).

Positive results mean the device has detected viral antigens predicting the presence of transmissible virus. Negative results mean antigens have not been detected, indicating it is unlikely that an individual has transmissible COVID infection.

> **How often you should test may vary depending on your circumstances and current national or local guidelines.**

What your results mean

Positive results mean the device has detected the presence of viral antigens, which are specific proteins found on the surface of the live virus. This means that you are currently infected with COVID-19 and risk infecting others.

Negative results mean antigens have not been detected, but does not completely rule out COVID-19 infection, particularly in the early stages of infection when the virus is still at low levels. Anyone with a negative test but with symptoms of concern should seek medical advice.

Positive or negative results for COVID-19 do not rule out other bacterial or viral infections.

> **Report your result to find out more about it and get the guidance you need to follow (see page 15).**

This test is suitable for the following people:

Adults aged 18+ Self-test and report, with assistance if needed.

Adolescents aged 12 – 17 Self-test and report with adult supervision. The adult may conduct the test as necessary.

Children under 12 Children under 12 years of age should be tested by an adult. **Do not conduct this test if you do not feel confident testing a child.** Do not continue the test if the child feels any pain.

Please see page 11 for tips on how to test a child.

COVID-19 guidance

If you have COVID-19 symptoms or have contracted COVID-19, visit:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19

You can also get more advice about COVID-19 in children at:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/

If your symptoms get worse

If an adult or child has symptoms of COVID-19 and the condition gets worse, or does not get better after 7 days, visit NHS online at:
www.111.nhs.uk or call **111**.

In case of a medical emergency

If you have a medical emergency, or if a baby or child seems very unwell, or you think there is something seriously wrong, call **999**.

Do not delay getting help if you are worried. Trust your instincts.

What you need to do

It's very important you read the instructions and follow the steps in the correct order. **Each test will take about 15 minutes to set up and results will be ready after a further 30 minutes.**

Store the test kit at room temperature or in a cool dry place (2°C to 30°C). Do not leave in direct sunlight and do not store in a fridge or freezer.

The kit should be used at room temperature (15°C to 30°C). If the kit has been stored in a cool area (less than 15°C), leave it at normal room temperature for 30 minutes before using.

Keep the test kit away from children.

General guidance and warnings

Use a separate test kit for each person. All items in the test kit can only be used once. Do not re-use them. You will need to report each person's result.

If you have problems with your hands or vision, you may need someone to assist you with the swabbing and testing process.

If you have a nose piercing swab the other nostril. If pierced on both sides remove the piercing on one side before swabbing.

If you have had a nosebleed within the last 24 hours, swab the other nostril or wait 24 hours.

Avoid eating or drinking for at least 30 minutes before doing the test to reduce the risk of spoiling the test.

These kits are only designed for human use.

Failure to follow the instructions in this booklet may affect the performance of the test and invalidate the test results.

⚠ **If there is a reason you cannot take a throat swab, for example you have a tracheostomy, instead swab both nostrils.**

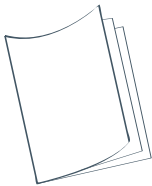# 1. Prepare your test area and check your test kit contents

⚠ **Avoid eating or drinking for at least 30 minutes before doing the test to reduce the risk of spoiling the test.**

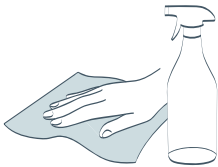⚠ **You will need: a watch (or a clock), tissues, a mirror and hand sanitiser.**

1 **Read this instruction guide carefully.**

You can also see a demonstration of how to take the test by watching the video at **www.gov.uk/covid19-self-test-help**

2 **Clear, clean and dry a flat surface immediately before starting the test.**

3 **Wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds, using soap and warm water, or hand sanitiser.** This is so that you do not contaminate the test kit. Now dry your hands.

If doing more than one test, clean the surface and wash your hands again between each test.
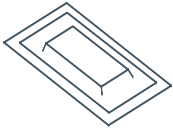
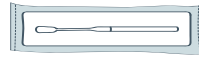**4** **Check your contents. Make sure that nothing is damaged or broken.**
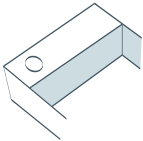
☐ **Extraction buffer sachet**

☐ **Extraction tube**

☐ **Test strip in sealed packaging**

☐ **Swab inside sealed wrapper**

☐ **Extraction tube holder** (attached to the box)
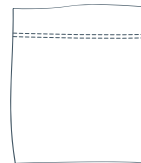
☐ **Waste bag**

⚠ **Do not use the test strip if the sealed packaging is damaged.**

Something damaged, broken or missing? If you notice anything damaged, broken, missing or difficult to use in the kit, **do not use it.** If you wish to provide feedback on this please call the customer contact centre. Lines open every day, 7am to 11pm.
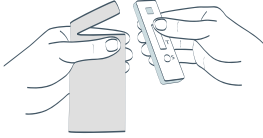
- England, Wales, Northern Ireland: **119** (free from mobiles and landlines)
- Scotland: **0300 303 2713** (charged at your standard network rate)

If something in the kit is difficult to use or breaks while using it, please also report the problem using the Coronavirus Yellow Card website: **https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk**

2. Set up your test

5 Take the test strip out of the foil pack and place it onto the cleaned flat surface. Once opened, start the test within 30 minutes.
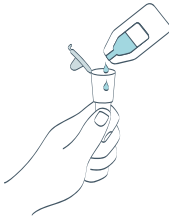
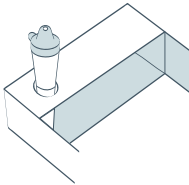**!** Safely dispose of the desiccant bag in your household waste.

6 **Carefully twist or snap open the sachet.** Being careful not to spill any of the fluid.

7 **Open the extraction tube and gently squeeze all of the fluid from the sachet.** Avoid touching the sachet against the tube.

8 **Close the extraction tube cap and place the filled tube in the extraction tube holder (attached inside the box) to avoid spilling the fluid.**

You can also use a small cup to hold the tube.

9

Gently blow your nose into a tissue and throw it away in your household rubbish. If you are testing a child help them to blow their nose. This is so that you get rid of excess mucus.
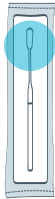
10

Wash and dry your hands again (or use sanitiser if this is available).

If you are performing this test on another person, both people should rewash or sanitise their hands.
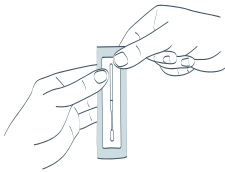
11

Soft tip

Handle

Find the swab in the sealed wrapper in front of you. Identify the soft, fabric tip of the swab.

12

Peel open the swab package and gently take out the swab. This will be used for both throat and nose.

! **Never touch the soft, fabric tip of the swab with your hands.**

3. Take your swab sample

⚠ **Do not touch the tongue, teeth, cheeks, gums, or any other surfaces with the fabric tip of the swab.**

If this happens, the swab is invalid and you will need to start again with a new test kit.

Never touch the fabric tip with your hands.

Swabbing may feel uncomfortable, do not insert swab any deeper if there is strong resistance or pain.

If testing a child under 12, use the steps on the next page.

13   x4   **Holding the swab between your fingers, open your mouth wide and rub the fabric tip of the swab over both tonsils (or where they would have been). Do this with firm contact 4 times on each side** (use a mirror to help you do this). Carefully remove the swab from the back of your throat.
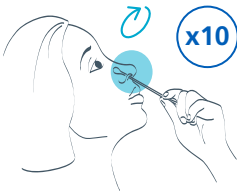
14   x10   Put the same swab gently into 1 nostril until you feel a slight resistance (about 2.5cm up your nose).

Roll the swab firmly around the inside of the nostril, making 10 complete circles.

Testing a child

Children under 12 should be tested by an adult. Follow the guidelines below on how to prepare and test a child. You can watch a demonstration video at **www.gov.uk/covid19-self-test-help**

Show the child the test kit and take them through the steps. Try practising taking the test without using any of the test kit materials. If possible, sit them on someone's lap or have someone hold their hand.

Ask the child to open their mouth as wide as they can and say 'Ahhhh' (this will make the tonsils easier to see) for as long as they can while you swab their tonsils (or where their tonsils would be if they have been removed).

13   **x4**
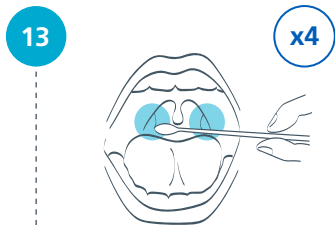
If you cannot swab the tonsils, you can swab both nostrils.

Ask the child to open their mouth wide, then rub the fabric tip of the swab over both tonsils (or where they would have been). Do this with firm contact 4 times on each side. Carefully remove the swab.
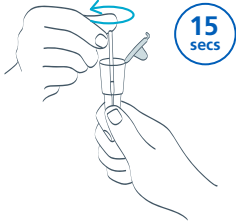
14   **x10**
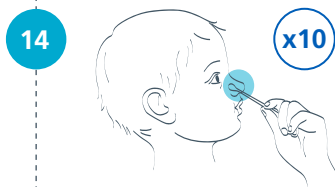
Put the fabric tip of the same swab gently into 1 of their nostrils until you feel some resistance.

Roll the swab firmly around the inside of the nostril, making 10 complete circles and slowly remove it.

You can get more advice about COVID-19 in children at:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/
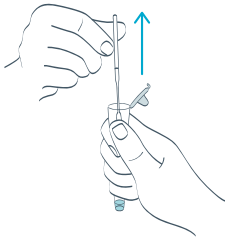
4. Process the swab sample

15

15 secs

Pick up the extraction tube, open the lid and place the fabric tip of the swab into the tube so it is in the fluid.

Press the tip against the edge of the extraction tube with force, while rotating it around the tube for 15 seconds. This is to transfer your sample into the fluid.

16

Pinch the tube against the swab as you remove it. Make sure all the fluid is removed from the soft tip of the swab.

Place the swab in the plastic waste bag provided.

17
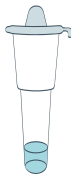
Press the cap tightly on to the extraction tube to avoid any leaks.

18
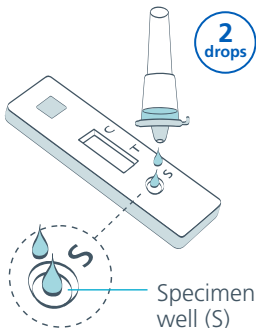
2 drops

Gently squeeze the extraction tube to place 2 drops of the fluid onto the specimen well (S) on the test strip. Make sure that you are dropping fluid and not an air bubble.

Put the extraction tube in the waste bag along with the swab.

Specimen well (S)

⚠ **Make sure you place the test strip on a flat and level surface. Do not move the strip during the test.**

19
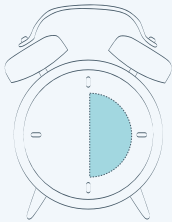
Check the time and set a timer if you have one. Wait 30 minutes before you read your result.

Waiting the full 30-minute development time before you read your result is very important.

A positive result can appear at any time after 20 minutes, however you must wait for the full 30 minutes to record a negative result as the test line (T) may take this long to appear.

If a positive result appears after 30 minutes, it should not be reported as positive.

Find out how to read and report your result on the next page.

⚠ **Do not read your result after 30 minutes.**

5. Read your result

You will see the control line (C) begin to appear after about 4 minutes. You must wait 30 minutes before your result is ready.

⚠ **Do not leave the test to develop for longer than 30 minutes as this will make the result invalid.**

Negative result

One line next to C indicates the test is negative.

Control (C)

Test (T)

Positive result

Two lines, one next to C and one next to T, even faint lines, indicate the test is positive. You must report this test result to the NHS, please see **page 15** for guidance on how to do this.

⚠ **If your test result is positive, you and your household must self-isolate following Government Guidelines.**

Invalid result

No lines or one line next to T indicates the test is invalid.

Report your result to find out more about it and get the guidance you need to follow (see page 15).

6. Report your result

You must report your results to the NHS.

Report your result so the NHS can monitor the spread of the virus, support communities across the UK, combat the virus and save lives. You can also find out more about the result and what you need to do.
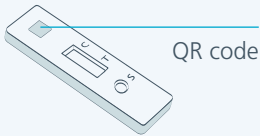
QR code

You need the QR code, or the ID number under it, on the test strip to report your result.

Report online

Visit: **www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result**

Or **report by telephone**

Lines are open every day, 7am to 11pm.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland: **119** (free from mobiles and landlines)

Scotland: **0300 303 2713** (charged at your standard network rate)

7. Safely dispose of your test kit

Once your test is complete, **put all of the used test kit contents in the waste bag provided.** Place in your general household waste.

What your results mean

Positive result

If you get a **positive result**, it is likely that you were infectious at the time the test was taken. When you report your result, you will be provided with further information on the next steps to take.

> ⚠️ **You, anyone who lives with you, and anyone in your support bubble, must self-isolate in accordance with current national and local guidance, which can be found at nhs.uk/self-isolate**

Negative result

If you get a **negative result**, it is likely that you were not infectious at the time the test was taken.

If you test negative, you still need to follow national and local rules and guidelines including regular handwashing, social distancing, wearing face coverings, where required.

Invalid result

If you get an **invalid result**, this means that the test has not run correctly. The test can be repeated if you have access to another test kit, but do not reuse any components.

> If you do not have another test available, you may book a PCR test through the NHS COVID-19 App, or visiting **https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test** or by calling 119.

Test performance

The test is more likely to give a positive result if someone has high levels of COVID-19. This means that it is most likely to detect the people who are currently infectious and need to immediately self-isolate.

Overall the test result identifies people who account for 90% of the spread of COVID-19. This also means people who test negative account for 10% of the spread of COVID-19.

This test has a specificity of 99.7%, which means that, out of a thousand people who don't have coronavirus, 997 will get a negative result on this test - but 3 will test positive.

Make a note of your test results

This is for your own records. You must still report your result to the NHS (see page 15 for information).

Who took the test	Date	Time	Test result

Your kit contains the following materials

Items	3-Pack	7-Pack
Instructions for Use (this document)	1	1
Extraction tube holder	1	1
Test strips in sealed packaging	3	7
Extraction buffer sachets	3	7
Extraction tubes	3	7
Swabs inside sealed wrapper	3	7
Waste bags	3	7

Manufacturer: Department of Health and Social Care, 39 Victoria Street, Westminster, London, SW1 0EU.

Index of symbols

30°C ... 2°C	Store at 2 – 30°C	STERILE EO	Sterilized using ethylene oxide	Manufacturer
LOT	Lot number		Expiry date	IVD
	Keep away from sunlight		Date of manufacture	Do not re-use
	Keep dry	i	Consult instructions for use	

Manufacturer		Don't use the product when the package is damaged
In vitro diagnostic medical device		
Do not re-use		Warning, please refer to the instruction