COVID- 19 Testing

Date updated: 4/01/2022

Festive Period

Lateral flow tests are now available to collect from City Libraries. All three libraries are closed from 1 to 4 January 2022.

Please note that the Lateral Flow Test (LFT) testing site at Aldermanbury will be open between 9am to 3.15pm on Tuesday 4 January for testing only.

Normal service (including outreach) will resume on Wednesday 5 January. See below for more information regarding LFT tests.

Four actions you can take to protect yourself and others

- If you are unwell, stay at home to avoid spreading winter bugs
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 (including any wider symptoms), stay at home and take a PCR test
- If you do not have symptoms, consider taking a rapid COVID-19 test before visiting busy indoor spaces, such as shops, restaurants, or travelling to work, or before meeting people who are extremely vulnerable to COVID-19. This could mean testing more frequently than twice a week
- Wear a face covering in crowded places – such as on public transport - wash your hands regularly, and let fresh air in

Get tested for COVID-19

Testing for COVID-19 helps to identify when someone has the virus and needs to self-isolate. By self-isolating, spreading of the virus can be much reduced. Testing is important no matter whether you have had one or more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, or none.

If you have been in contact with someone who has received a positive test, you are required by law to self-isolate immediately for ten days (since your last contact with them) and order a PCR test unless:

- you are fully vaccinated (except in Omicron cases)
- you are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, please self-isolate immediately and order a PCR test. Remember, even if you are fully vaccinated and don't have symptoms of COVID-19 you may still pass it on, so please consider working from home, avoiding busy places and where a face covering where possible.

More information on testing below.

Rapid (lateral flow) tests for people without symptoms/employers

One in three people with COVID-19 do not display any symptoms, and so may be able to transmit the virus to others without knowing.

It is therefore advised that anyone **without** symptoms of COVID-19 tests at least twice a week with rapid (lateral flow) tests, as this can help people to realise when they are infected and self-isolate quickly without further spreading the virus to others. Rapid testing is advised when you are likely to be visiting busy indoor spaces, and/ or mixing with people who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

It is ideal to test at or near to home before travelling to a venue and/ or using public transport. Results show in 15 to 30 minutes.

If you do not already access rapid testing through an educational setting, or workplace, there are a number of ways you can access rapid tests:

- [By ordering home testing kits to your home(external link)](#)

- By collecting home testing kits from a collection point, such as a pharmacy, community centre or testing centre. Use the [NHS COVID-19 Test and Vaccination Site Finder tool(external link)](), or see "Get tests to do at home" below.
- By booking a test appointment locally – see "Book a test appointment" below

Get tests to do at home

Order a free COVID-19 test on the [NHS website(external link)]() or call **119**.

If you are unable to order a test, or test at your place of work or study you can collect rapid test kits from the COVID-19 Test Site Aldermanbury, London, EC2V 7HH. There is no need to book to collect your kits. If you develop coronavirus symptoms, a Lateral Flow Test will not be suitable. If you are due to have a Lateral Flow Test and develop symptoms you must not attend the centre.

The testing site at the COVID-19 Test Site Aldermanbury, London, EC2V 7HH (between 9am and 3.15pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday) is handing out rapid home testing kits. There is no need to book to collect your kits from the COVID-19 Test Site Aldermanbury.

Get tests for your employees

Testing is key to keeping your workforce and customers safe and healthy, as well as minimising business disruption. City workers are able to access any of the testing options listed above. Alternatively, they should be encouraged to access rapid testing near to where they live, by using the [NHS COVID-19 Test and Vaccination Site Finder tool(external link)]().

Members of the COVID-19 rapid testing team, operating on behalf of the City of London Corporation, are undertaking visits to hospitality and retail businesses in the Square Mile to provide information and rapid tests, to help them to protect their staff and customers from COVID-19. These tests are free and the team will never ask for payment or payment details. For any queries, [please contact the Rapid Testing Team]().

Book a test appointment

If you require a rapid test appointment, you can be tested at the COVID-19 Test Site Aldermanbury, you will need to book an appointment(external link). Opening hours are 9am - 3.15pm, Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

If you are unable to make an appointment for the COVID-19 Test Site Aldermanbury, there are other testing sites in Hackney(external link).

What to do with your result

Follow the guidance in the testing kit or given to you at a centre.

If you receive a negative test result, please remember to keep following the rules: wash your hands often, wear a face covering, practise social distancing and stay outdoors when meeting others outside your household/support bubble.

If you test positive from any lateral flow (rapid) test you must self-isolate and arrange to have a PCR test to confirm the result. You can book a PCR test by visiting GOV.UK(external link) or by calling **119**. This must be taken within two days of the positive lateral flow results (if you do not take the test within two days, you and everyone in your household must continue self-isolating for ten days, even if the confirmatory test is negative).

If you know you are going to be tested, before you leave home consider how you will travel back home in a way that protects others should you test positive.

If you have concerns about travelling back from the testing venue safely should you test positive, arrange a home test if available, or discuss this in advance with your employer and arrange to attend a community test centre near your home. If you are an essential worker, you can use the self-referral portal for testing essential workers(external link).

If you are a student and have concerns about travel arrangements should you test positive, you should discuss this with your college or university.

Queries about rapid testing kits

If you have any queries about the rapid testing kits, including the safe use of ethylene oxide in sterilising test swabs, [read this Government guidance(external link)](#) for more details.

If you have symptoms, get a PCR test

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, you must self-isolate immediately, even before you take a test and receive a result. You must not attend medical appointments, other than to get a PCR test.

Symptoms are:

- a new, continuous cough and/or

- a high temperature and/or

- a loss or change in normal sense of smell or taste

In addition to the main three symptoms, locally, we advise that you take a precautionary PCR test if you or your child experiences any wider symptoms which are new, persistent or unusual such as:

- shortness of breath or wheezing

- fatigue

- loss of appetite

- muscle ache or pain

- sore throat and/or hoarseness

- persistent headache

- runny or blocked nose

- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea

If you feel unwell, stay at home and take a PCR test. You should also book a PCR test if you've been in contact with someone who's tested positive.

Arrange a free test online(external link) or call the Coronavirus Testing Call Centre on **119** between the hours of 7am and 11pm. The service can be accessed by people with hearing or speech difficulties by calling **18001 119** (in England and Wales).

Please note that the Call Centre cannot provide clinical advice. If you are concerned about your health and wellbeing following your test result, or if your condition gets worse, or does not get better after seven days, use the NHS **111** online Coronavirus service(external link) or call NHS **111**. For a medical emergency dial **999**.

The testing centre, for people with symptoms of Coronavirus, is located in 65A Basinghall Street EC2V 5DZ, is open seven days a week, 8am-6pm and offers walk-in test appointments.

There are further testing sites in Hackney(external link) that you may be directed to.

If possible, walk, cycle or drive in a private vehicle alone to the test site.

If driving, you should travel by yourself or, if necessary, only with people from your household or support bubble. Follow the guidance on car-sharing(external link).

If you need to use public transport to travel to the test site, you should travel alone or, if necessary, only with people from your household or support bubble. Try to avoid travelling on busy routes or during busy periods, such as rush hour. Follow guidance to keep yourself, other passengers and public transport staff safe(external link).

If you have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, you may be alerted by **NHS Test and Trace**. You and others in your household/support bubble will need to self-isolate, following Government guidance about household isolation, unless:

- you are fully vaccinated (except in Omicron cases)
- you are below the age of 18 years 6 months
- you have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- you are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons

Information on isolation periods(external link) can be found on the NHS website. You will need to book a test if you develop symptoms.

You can arrange to have a single PCR test whether or not you have symptoms. This is because you are at a higher risk of being infected. The results of the PCR test will help NHS Test and Trace contact people who may have caught the virus from you. They can then self-isolate and avoid passing it on to others. Even if you test negative you must continue to self-isolate as you could still become infectious and pass the infection on to others. You must stay at home for the full ten days to avoid putting others at risk.

The NHS COVID-19 app is the official NHS contact tracing app for England and Wales. It is the fastest way of knowing when you're at risk from Coronavirus. The quicker you know, the quicker you can alert your loved ones, and your community. The more of us that use it, the better we can control Coronavirus. Visit the NHS COVID-19 app web page(external link) to download now.

You can access Government information on Test and Trace in other languages(external link). You can also access guidance if you have had contact with people with confirmed COVID-19 infection that you don't live with(external link) (this is also available in other languages).

Related links

- COVID-19 Latest Advice

- COVID-19

- GOV.UK - COVID-19

- COVID-19 Vaccine

- COVID-19 Advice for businesses

- COVID-19 Advice for Residents