

NHS Test and Trace FAQs



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Can district nurses administer the test or is there training for care workers?

Training has been delivered in care settings, and the test has been successfully self-administered by millions of people. The test usually involves taking a swab of the inside of your nose and the back of your throat, using a long cotton bud. This [video](#) might also be helpful.

More information will be shared on if district nurses can help residents with the test.

Will self-administered tests be less accurate?

There is currently no difference being reported between the accuracy of self-administered tests at home or self-administered tests when you access a testing centre.

[Please visit the GOV.UK guidance on Getting Tested](#)

What do you do if you live alone and get the virus very seriously?

You can either:

- Go online to www.111.nhs.uk
- Call your GP
- Or call 111

They will all be able to support you and give guidance on what you should do next

If you think you have covid-19 symptoms, please call your GP, hospital or pharmacy first rather than go straight there.

How do you give details of contacts if you have only been in contact with people you don't know, for example, in a food shop?

This is why using the NHS COVID-19 app is so important, it notifies other app users if they have come into contact with someone who has since tested positive for the virus.

If you test positive for coronavirus, you will either receive an alert via the app if you use the app, or via NHS Test and Trace who will send you a text, email alert or call you with instructions on how to share details of people you've been in close contact with.

Close contact means:

- Face-to-face contact with someone less than 1 metre away
- Spending more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of someone
- Travelling in a car or other small vehicle with someone

If you have been notified via NHS Test and Trace, it's important that you respond as soon as possible so that NHS Test and Trace can give appropriate advice to those who need it.

You will be asked to do this online via a secure website or you will be called by one of the contract tracers.

Would NHS Test and Trace say when you were in contact with the person?

They would say the date you were in contact with the person as you need to self-isolate for 10 days from when you last had contact, but they would not provide your name, this remains confidential.

How do you contact the Test and Trace team?

To order a test, phone **119** or go online: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

The helpline number: **020 3514 3817**

How do you know if you are being scammed?

If you want to be sure that the call is valid, you can hang up and dial 119 or the helpline number **020 3 514 3817**.

Contact tracers will never:

- ask you to dial a premium rate number to speak to them (for example, those starting 09 or 087)
- ask you to make any form of payment or purchase a product of any kind
- ask for any details about your bank account
- ask for your social media identities or login details, or those of your contacts
- ask you for any passwords or PINs, or ask you to set up any passwords or PINs over the phone
- disclose any of your personal or medical information to your contacts
- provide medical advice on the treatment of any potential coronavirus symptoms
- ask you to download any software to your PC or ask you to hand over control of your PC, smartphone or tablet to anyone else
- ask you to access any website that does not belong to the government or NHS

What financial help is available for self-employed and from employers if you have to self-isolate even if you're not sick?

From 28 September 2020, a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500 is potentially available if you are self-isolating because of COVID-19 and you are either employed or self-employed. The payment is to support people on low incomes who are unable to work from home if they are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and lose income as a result. For more information, head to <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-financial-support-during-self-isolation>

Is the information shared between government departments?

No. NHS Test and Trace will only share information on cases and contacts for the purposes of contact tracing and the COVID-19 response and would not share the information for other purposes.

Health professionals will not usually share personal medical data, even if requested by other government agencies, as this is likely to be a violation of a health professional's obligations under the Data Protection Act and patient confidentiality.

It will only be shared with other bodies when consent is given or under circumstances of legal necessity.

I've heard my information will be shared with the Police, is that right?

App users are anonymous and the app cannot force anyone to self-isolate or identify them if they are not self-isolating. The app cannot be used to track your location, for law enforcement, or to monitor self-isolation and social distancing.

However, we hope that you will follow app advice to self-isolate to protect your loved ones, our communities and stop the spread of the virus.

Please visit the NHS COVID-19 app FAQs for more information. (<https://covid19.nhs.uk/privacy-and-data.html>)

Do I have to download the app?

No. Downloading and using the NHS COVID-19 app is entirely voluntary and you can choose whether or not to download it. You can also uninstall and delete the app whenever you like.

The app is a vital tool in helping you protect the ones you love. Every person who uses the app will be helping in the fight against coronavirus (COVID-19) so we'd really urge you to download it and to encourage your family and friends to do the same.

Won't the app drain my phone's battery?

No. The app uses Bluetooth so shouldn't drain your phone battery, especially if you normally have Bluetooth enabled.

What if I said I'd contact everyone myself?

You can do that, but in order for the Government & NHS to understand how many people currently have the virus, it's important that NHS Test and Trace contact your close contacts directly through the test and trace service. This allows NHS Test and Trace to explain what those at risk of having been exposed to coronavirus must do to help prevent the further spread of the virus. It also allows us to monitor and act on any transmission of the virus across the borough.

It is important that you respond as soon as possible so that NHS Test and Trace can give appropriate advice to those who need it.

All information you provide to NHS Test and Trace is held in strict confidence and will only be kept and used in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

What kind of support /monitoring is there for those who are contacted/alerted?

The monitoring is self-monitoring, people are told they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, and they will be asked to self-isolate for 10 days and to ask for a test if they develop symptoms. For more information, please visit the [NHS advice on NHS Test and Trace](#): if you've been in contact with a person who has coronavirus.

When should I self-isolate from?

Anyone who needs to isolate due to symptoms or is confirmed as having coronavirus, should do so immediately from when they experience symptoms. If they have not had symptoms, the 10 days start from the date of the test.

If you are a household or close contact, your isolation period begins from when symptoms started or the day they were tested, if they have not had symptoms.

Further information can be found on the NHS website. (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/>)

Do the tracing team have translators as well as the testing team?

Yes, they have people who speak different languages and access to translation. If you need to access Test and Trace in another language, please call NHS **119**. The call centre staff have people who speak different languages and access to translation.

There are over 22,000 people in the contact tracing team – with the ability to communicate in multiple languages.

Is the test painful?

When a test is uncomfortable, it is better to be honest about it.

The film shows people how to do it themselves. The test usually involves taking a swab of the inside of your nose and the back of your throat, using a long cotton bud. This [video](#) might also be helpful.

It may be reassuring to know that over 7 million tests have been conducted so far, so a lot of people have taken the test and managed the discomfort. And that a confirmation of diagnosis can be reassuring to people who are worried if they have it or not.

What information is asked for and how is it stored?

The information you will be asked:

<p>Your details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your full name Date of birth NHS Number Postcode and house number Telephone number/ e-mail address Covid-19 symptoms, including when they started and their nature Contact details of anyone you have been in close contact with 	<p>Close contact details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their full name Date of birth Details of any Covid-19 symptoms they may have had
<p>Why Share</p> <p>To identify and alert others who may be at risk of developing infection, and unknowingly spreading it</p>	<p>Why Share</p> <p>For the contact tracers to provide advice on self-isolation and how to protect themselves and others from Covid-19.</p>

It's stored on computer systems, which have been tested to make sure they are secure and are being kept up-to-date to make sure they are safe from viruses and hacking.

You can find full details and information on the [NHS Test and Trace Privacy Notice](#).

Where does the information asked for go? Is it circulated to other people?

The information can only be seen by:

- the Public Health England staff working on NHS Test and Trace
- the contact tracers from Local Authority public health teams, who can only see the information of people with COVID-19 and their contacts for their local area
- the contact tracers working for NHS Professionals, who can only see the information of the people with COVID-19 and the contacts they have been instructed to call
- the contact tracers working for Serco UK and SITEL Group, who can only see the information of the contacts they have been instructed to call

All the Public Health England, Local Authority public health team, NHS Professionals, Serco UK and SITEL Group staff working on NHS Test and Trace have been trained to protect the confidentiality of people with COVID-19 and their contacts.

You can find full details and information on the [NHS Test and Trace Privacy Notice](#).

Are people on the phone volunteers/paid weekly?

Contact tracers are paid.

If care home staff are entitled to testing even if asymptomatic, on a regular basis to will Personal Assistants who work directly for a disabled person also be eligible for regular testing? And what about family members who are providing significant amounts of care to “vulnerable” people.

Personal Care Assistants are included in the list of essential workers who can apply for priority testing through GOV.UK.

The [GOV.UK guidance on essential workers](#) states that an essential worker can ask for a test if they are showing symptoms.

Employers of essential workers can also ask for tests for essential workers so this would apply to the disabled person employing a Personal Assistant directly as to any other employer.

[Please see the GOV.UK guidance here](#).

The guidance does not include family members caring for vulnerable people.

How many people are in the test and trace team and in what area in RBKC are they based?

There are over 22,000 contact tracers working in the Test and Trace team, this is a national team so there isn't a local base in RBKC.

A mobile testing unit is available in the borough for two days each week.

Further details can be found on the [Council's website](#) or when visiting online at: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or calling **119**.

I confirm I understood correctly...Is the free swab test available to everyone who has symptoms?

Yes, that is correct.

Anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus, whatever their age can ask for a test through nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119.

People with learning disabilities would not be able to do any of this without support and not everyone has access to regular support. What support is available for people with a learning disability to access testing?

In addition to requesting home tests, people requiring a test can visit a testing centre or an NHS facility to be tested. These sites will be staffed and able to support people unable to self-administer swabs.

The government guidance on Covid-19 testing describes the process:

www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested#the-testing-process

Mencap has developed an easy read testing document

<https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=http://www.equalpeoplemencap.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/All-about-COVID-19-having-a-test.pdf>

Can I get a swab test more than once?

Anyone in England and Wales who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) can get a free test to check if they have the virus, regardless of having received a test for the virus before.

You must stay at home (self-isolate) again and ask for a test if you get symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (high temperature, new and continuous cough, or loss or change to your sense of smell or taste).

Types of tests, testing kit and administration

SWAB TEST (PCR) test: This is a test to see if you currently have the virus. The test usually involves taking a swab of the inside of your nose and the back of your throat, using a long cotton bud.

If you take the test yourself at home, take care not to touch your tongue, teeth, or gums, or any other surfaces with the swab. Put it back in the tube, fabric side facing down, and send back the same day as the test. Make sure you book collection in advance.

There is no difference in accuracy if the test is self-administered at home or at a test centre, as the process of taking the test is the same.

ANTIBODY TEST: This is a test to see if you have previously had the virus. If someone had the virus and has recovered, it is assumed that the body would have produced some antibodies to fight it. This test identifies the presence of those antibodies.

The test works by taking a blood sample and testing for the presence of antibodies to see if the individual has developed an immune response to the virus.

As of 30 June 2020, antibody tests are currently only open to health and social care workers. Please see the [GOV.UK guidance](#) on antibody tests for the latest advice and information .

There is no strong evidence yet to suggest that people who are found to have had the virus and have antibodies develop long-lasting immunity which would prevent them from getting the virus again. Regardless of having antibodies, it's crucial that you continue to follow social distancing and exercise good hand hygiene to prevent contracting the virus and/or passing it onto others.

PRIVATE TESTS: Paid tests in private settings. The NHS has not made testing kits available to private clinicians and they do not have an obligation to share the data with the NHS and Public Health England. The Government cannot account for the accuracy of the tests, and the subsequent advice received after it. If you develop symptoms, we urge you to use NHS testing.

What if I do not want to provide details, or if those who I have had close contact with try to persuade me not to hand them over?

The scheme is voluntary. However, we all have a role to play in helping to make the Test and Trace service work. The more we use Test and Trace, the sooner we will be able to return to life as close to normal as possible.

We trust the public to “do the right thing” but if you feel uncomfortable about using NHS Test and Trace, we would like to understand the reasons for not wanting to use the service.

If compliance is low, penalties – such as fines – may be introduced for non-compliance.

Will I only need to self-isolate once? What if I have already had the virus and have recovered, and alerted to self-isolate again?

Not necessarily! There is no strong evidence yet to suggest that people who are found to have had the virus and have antibodies develop long-lasting immunity which would prevent them from getting the virus again. Those being asked to self-isolate because of close contact with a confirmed case could also see this happen more than once.

Regardless of having antibodies or having knowingly had the virus, its crucial people continue to use NHS Test and Trace, follow the hands, face, space advice to prevent contracting the virus and/or passing it onto others.

Where can I find the latest Test and Trace data?

The latest government data can be found at <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>.

I don't understand the Government coronavirus data, what does 'rate' mean?

The **GOV.UK** coronavirus in the UK data shows the latest number of coronavirus (COVID-19) tests, cases and deaths in the UK. The data is updated daily and breaks down the information by nation, region and council. It includes the total number of cases, as well as another column listing the 'rate'.

The rate means the number of infections per 100,000 of the population meaning the number of people per 100,000 within an area who have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Using rates per 100,00 allows us to compare the level of infection across London and nationally.

Where can I get a test?

To ask for a test, please visit: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call NHS 119. You must book to attend, please do not turn up at a testing site without an appointment.

The mobile testing unit in Westminster is at Olympia, in the Motorail Care Park on two consecutive days every week (10.30am-3.30pm). Find out when the mobile testing unit is next available on the council website. [<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom-rbkc>]

A semi-permanent, walk-through testing centre is now open seven days a week, from 8am to 8pm at The Hub, 2-4 Malton Road, W10 5UP.

For more information, please visit the website. (<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom/all-council-statements/new-coronavirus-testing-centre-north-kensington>)

Home testing kits are also available for anyone not able to get to a testing site.