

COVID – 19 Staff Self Testing Kits

The guide below will give you a brief introduction into why the testing kits are being distributed and how to use the kit.

What each staff member should receive:

- An Innova testing kit box containing all the equipment the staff member needs to complete the test (please ask staff not to follow the manufacturer instructions but the ones in the NHS user guide booklet)
- An NHS booklet which contains information all about the testing kit and detailed instructions on how to complete the test
- A letter from Walsall Healthcare Trust containing information about the staff testing kits with links to how to do the test on the learning HUB along with the website address for staff to upload their test results
- A QR code which staff can scan with their mobile which will take them directly to the website to input their test result

The testing kits are for patient facing staff members only and we trust staff to use them as intended. The kits are not for testing other household members or friends and should not be sold for financial gain.

Why are we issuing the test kits now?

Our staff have been asking for some time for regular testing and we are pleased to now be able to offer this to the staff. Kits have been distributed by the government to all NHS Trusts within the UK and these are now being distributed to staff.

The testing kits offer staff the opportunity to be able to self-test themselves and so keep themselves, their families and colleagues safe, as well as helping to reduce hospital outbreaks of the virus.

How to use the kit

The Innova testing kit comes with 25 testing kits in the box. There is 12 weeks' worth of testing kits in the box. We are asking staff to test themselves twice a week in their home environment i.e. every 3 to 4 days to fit in with shift patterns. An example might be Wednesday and Saturday or Monday and Thursday. It is important to **leave 72 hours between each test taken**.

How to take the test:

Please note: this is a short guide below for the trainer to understand how the test works. The NHS booklet provides detailed instructions on how to take the test and you may wish just to refer to the booklet.

The test is a **nasal only swab test**. It is not a throat swab like the PCR test.

- Make sure hands have been cleaned and washed
- Blow your nose into a tissue to get rid of any excess mucus
- Take the test tube and the solution and place 6 drops of the solution into the tube

- Take the swab out of the sealed wrapper and place this into one nostril (about 1.5cm up or half an inch)roll the swab around slowly 10 times - repeat in the other nostril
- Put the fabric end of the swab into the liquid in the test tube for 10 seconds and rotate the swab around in the liquid
- Take out the swab and place back into the wrapper or directly into your rubbish bin. Note the whole kit can be safely disposed of in your normal domestic bin at home.
- Press the cap onto the tube
- Lightly squeeze 2 drops onto the cartridge and wait the full 30 minutes for the result to appear. The booklet shows what the lines on the cartridge represent and it is very similar to a pregnancy test.
- Record the result (includes positive, negative and invalid results) onto the database after they have waited the stated **30 minutes** for the test result.

The test will indicate either a positive, negative or invalid result. A second line on the test strip, however faint indicates a positive result. In the event of an invalid test, throw away everything to do with the first test and re-do the test.

Staff must **record each test result onto the website** which can be accessed via either the website on the letter or by scanning the QR code issued. The website can be accessed from any computer or mobile device. Staff do not have to use a Trust computer to access the site.

Recording via a mobile phone is the simplest and quickest way to record results. On scanning the QR code, it opens a very short questionnaire that takes a few seconds to complete.

If the test is positive, staff must:

- contact their line manager to notify them and to record on ESR
- not come into work
- immediately follow current Government guidelines on self-isolation
- Obtain a further PCR COVID 19 test via contacting Occupational Health or through the government website to book a test. to be able to attend a test centre or receive a postal test

Once the staff member has received the result of their PCR test they must notify their line manager. If the PCR COVID 19 test comes back as negative, the staff member can return to work.

Frequently asked questions

Are the kits for non-clinical staff?

The kits are for all patient facing staff members in our hospital that would come into regular contact with patients. This includes non-clinical staff such as ward clerks, reception desks, housekeeping, catering, porters, IT engineers and volunteers.

Can I still have a self-testing kit if I am agency staff, a student nurse or bank staff?

Yes providing your host organisation has not provided you with a kit.

When should I take the test?

There is no fixed time to take the test. However the test should be taken at home and should be done twice over 7 days with at least 3 days (minimum 72 hours) in between. The test must not be taken on consecutive days.

I am currently part of a research study (for example the SIREN study). Would I still need to do the self-testing kit?

Staff who are participating in research studies where the frequency of testing is not weekly (e.g. every two weeks or monthly) would be expected to still take the self-testing kit.

Are the testing kits mandatory?

The testing kits are not mandatory. However we are encouraging staff that regularly come into contact with patients to complete the tests to keep both their families and colleagues safe, to stop the spread of infection amongst staff in the hospital, to patients and also the wider community.

Should I take the test if I don't have any symptoms?

Remember some people who contract the virus do not have any symptoms and so may unknowingly be going to work and doing their everyday activities and passing the virus to others. Regular testing for patient-facing staff members is something you have been asking for. By providing you with the kits that you can do at home, and your participation in regularly self-testing will ensure we all do everything we can to minimise the further spread of COVID 19. Let's keep our work colleagues, family members, friends and neighbours as safe and well as we can whilst we live amidst this pandemic.

What is the accuracy of the test?

The Innova testing kits were recently used during the trials carried out in Liverpool and their accuracy has recently been published. The tests made by Innova return very few false positives. 99.68% of people who did not have the virus received a negative test result. In other words, very few people who do not have the virus which causes Covid-19 will be told wrongly that they do have it, after doing a lateral flow test.

However, the tests do return considerably more false negatives. Just 76.8% of people who did have the virus received a positive result (meaning the rest received false negatives).

This percentage can vary though depending on how much virus is in the person's system—the test detected over 95% of individuals with “high viral loads”.

PCR tests are still considered the gold standard for testing for the Covid-19 virus but like lateral flow tests, tend to return a higher rate of false negatives than false positives.

If the self-test says I'm positive why do I then need to have a further PCR COVID 19 test?

The Innova tests are not as accurate as the PCR tests. In particular we know that they sometimes record positive tests in people who are negative on PCR which is the current “gold standard” test.

I have tested positive with Covid previously. How long would I have to wait before starting the self-testing kit?

COVID 19 tests remain positive for up to 90 days therefore staff should not start self-testing during this time.

I am leaving before 12 weeks to move to another Trust. Can I still have a kit?

Yes, staff in this situation would still be eligible to receive a self-testing kit.

Does the self-test also produce false negatives?

It is possible but this is much less likely than false positives. If you have any symptoms of Covid19 you should get a PCR test by calling 119 and isolate until the result of that.