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Guidance

Rapid lateral flow testing for households and bubbles of school pupils and staff

Find out who is eligible for twice-weekly testing and how to get tested if you do not have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). This guidance is for people without symptoms.

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About 1 in 3 people with coronavirus do not have symptoms but can still pass it on to others. Regular testing of people without symptoms is important to help stop the virus spreading and protect your loved ones. As lockdown restrictions gradually ease we all need to play our part to help protect each other.

The following people in England will have access to regular rapid lateral flow testing made available to them as schools reopen:

- secondary school pupils
- primary and secondary school staff
- households, childcare and support bubbles of primary and secondary-age pupils
- households, childcare and support bubbles of primary and secondary staff

Primary school pupils will not be asked to test at this time.

Find out about childcare bubbles (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-childcare-bubble-with-another-household>) and support bubbles (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-support-bubble-with-another-household>).

Learn what rapid lateral flow testing is and why it's being used.
(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-lateral-flow-antigen-testing-for-people-without-symptoms>)

If you have coronavirus symptoms

The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, arrange to have a PCR test if you have not already had one. Stay at home while you are waiting for a home self-sampling kit, a test site appointment or a test result. Do not use the rapid lateral flow testing service as this is only for people without symptoms.

Order a test for people with symptoms (<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>) online or call 119.

How to get a rapid lateral flow test

There are different ways to get a test for school staff, pupils, and members of their households, childcare and support bubbles in England who do not have symptoms of coronavirus.

Secondary school pupils

Upon returning to school, secondary school pupils will be asked to take their:

- first 3 tests at their place of study under the supervision of a trained operator
- fourth test themselves using a home test kit

Pupils will then continue taking twice-weekly tests using a home test kit provided by their school. Pupils must report their result to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed, either online or by telephone, as set out in the home test kit instructions.

Primary or secondary school staff

Upon returning to school, teaching and non-teaching staff of primary and secondary schools should take twice-weekly tests using a home test kit provided by their school. This includes permanent, temporary and voluntary school staff.

Staff should contact their school for further details.

Members of households, childcare or support bubbles of school staff and pupils

This section does not apply to secondary school pupils, and primary and secondary school staff, who should take twice-weekly tests using home test kits provided by their school.

From 1 March 2021, if you're a member of a household, childcare bubble or support bubble of staff or a pupil you can get a twice-weekly test:

- through your employer if they offer testing to employees
- at a local test site
- by collecting a home test kit from a test site
- by ordering a home test kit online

Get a test through your employer

Your workplace may offer rapid lateral flow testing to you. Contact your employer to find out more.

Take a test at a rapid lateral flow test site

You can take a rapid lateral flow test at a local site. Testing at these sites is assisted, which means you will swab yourself under the supervision of a trained operator.

You may need to book an appointment.

Find your nearest rapid lateral flow test site (<https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>).

Collect test kits

You can collect up to 4 home test kits at a local collection point. Each kit contains 7 tests.

Anyone 18 or over can collect. You can check online if the location is busy before you go.

Find your nearest home test kit collection point (<https://find-covid-19-rapid-test-sites.maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>).

Order home test kits online

If you cannot get tested at your workplace, or are unable to go to a test site or collect test kits, you can order a home test kit online.

The online service will be available from 1 March 2021

What twice-weekly testing involves

You will be asked to:

- take a test twice a week (every 3 or 4 days apart)
- report every result to NHS Test and Trace on the same day you take the test

Report your test result online (<https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>) or by calling 119.

If anyone tests positive or gets coronavirus symptoms, they should tell the school and:

- self-isolate immediately

- get a PCR test to confirm the result
- follow the stay at home guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>)

A negative result means the test did not find signs of coronavirus. But this does not guarantee you do not have coronavirus, so you should keep following all coronavirus advice




(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19/how-to-stop-the-spread-of-coronavirus-covid-19>) including:

- regular handwashing
- social distancing
- wearing a face covering where recommended

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(<https://www.gov.uk/transition>)

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