

## Patient information factsheet

# Rapid lateral flow test for COVID-19 before coming into hospital for a planned procedure

We have given you this factsheet because you are booked in for a planned procedure at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS). It includes important information about how to prepare, so please keep it in a safe place. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

### Why do I need to be tested for COVID-19 before coming into hospital?

COVID-19, along with many other respiratory infections such as influenza (flu), can spread easily and cause serious illness in some people. You may be infected with COVID-19 and not have any symptoms but still pass infection onto others.

In order to ensure the safety of all our patients and staff, we are asking patients to perform a test for COVID-19 before coming into hospital for planned procedures. The test we would like you to perform is called a rapid lateral flow test. You may have heard this called a 'lateral flow test'.

### About rapid lateral flow tests

Rapid lateral flow tests help to check if someone has COVID-19. If people who test positive stay at home and avoid contact with other people, it helps stop the virus spreading. Research shows rapid lateral flow tests are a reliable test for COVID-19. They give a quick result and do not need to be sent to a lab.

The test usually involves taking a sample from your throat and nose, or from your nose only, using a swab. You get a result in 15 to 30 minutes depending on the type of test you've taken.

You should perform your rapid lateral flow test yourself (or with assistance from a member of your family or a friend) at home before attending the hospital for your procedure.

### Please contact your UHS clinical team immediately if:

- you are unable to take a rapid lateral flow test (for whatever reason)
- you develop symptoms of COVID-19 (please read the 'Symptoms of COVID-19' section below)
- you come into contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 during the 7 days before your procedure.

Your clinical team's contact details can be found on your appointment letter.

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## How can I get a rapid lateral flow test kit?

It is your responsibility to get a rapid lateral flow test kit and carry out the test yourself at home before coming into hospital for your procedure or appointment.

Rapid lateral flow test kits are available:

- **online:** via GOV.UK (to order a rapid lateral flow test kit online, please go to: [www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests))
- **by telephone:** call **119** and a call handler will place the order for you.

In some cases your healthcare professional may offer to order a test kit for you, and this will be sent directly to your address. Please note that your healthcare professional will require a valid mobile number to order the test kit

## When should I take the rapid lateral flow test?

When your procedure is arranged you will be told when you need to take the rapid lateral flow test. For most procedures you will be asked to take two tests:

1. **The first test should be taken at home, three days before your planned procedure.**
2. **The second test should be taken at home on the morning of your procedure.**

You will need to follow the specific instructions included with the test kit on how to take the test.

For a small number of procedures you will only be asked to take one test at home on the morning of your procedure.

## After the first test

Wherever possible you should take measures to reduce your risk of catching COVID-19 between the test and the procedure, including:

- limit social contact with others
- let fresh air in if meeting others indoors
- practise good hygiene: wash hands, cover your coughs and sneezes, and clean surroundings frequently
- wear a face covering or mask especially in crowded and enclosed spaces.

## What should I do after taking the rapid lateral flow test?

### If your result is negative

Wherever possible you should report the test results online at [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or by telephoning 119. This will generate an email or text message confirmation of the result. You should bring proof of the recent negative tests (email or text notification) with you when you attend for your procedure.

If you do not have access to email/text notification you should bring alternate proof of the negative test which can include:

- a photograph on your smartphone of the negative test result
- your rapid lateral flow test stick (please bring this with you to hospital in a little bag, wrapped in cling film or in a sealed envelope)

### If your result is positive

You should not come to the hospital for your planned procedure or appointment. Please call your clinical team using the telephone number on your appointment letter to inform them of

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your positive test result. They will explain what the next steps are. You will also need to report your test result on the government portal (wherever possible).

## What should I do if I feel unwell on the day of my procedure or appointment?

If you feel unwell on the day of your procedure or appointment, please call your clinical team using the telephone number on your appointment letter for advice before coming into hospital. Your procedure or appointment may need to be rescheduled.

If you have any of the symptoms below, you should not come to the hospital for your procedure or appointment (unless your clinical team has told you otherwise).

## Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) in can include:

- a high temperature or shivering (chills) – a high temperature means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted
- an aching body
- a headache
- a sore throat
- a blocked or runny nose
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- feeling sick or being sick.

The symptoms are very similar to symptoms of other illnesses, such as colds and flu.

## Contact us

If you have any questions about this advice, please contact your clinical team using the contact details on your appointment letter. Alternatively, you can contact our PALS (patient advice and liaison service) team on telephone: **023 8120 6325**.

## Useful links

### NHS UK

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

### GOV.UK

[www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19)

[www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19-and-have-not-taken-a-covid-19-test](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19-and-have-not-taken-a-covid-19-test)

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**