Coronavirus\* tests

A summary for team members

There are two kinds of tests for Coronavirus infection.

**1. Test for whether you have the virus infection now.**

This test is now open to any member of public who has symptoms of coronavirus.

It requires swabs from the nose and throat by a trained professional.

* This looks for the virus itself. It is called Antigen test.
* The test is useful when you are having new symptoms, or soon after you have been in contact with another person with infection.
* The virus shows up in the nose and throat from day 3 to day 7 of contact with the virus – that is the best time to do this test.

**To request this test:**

* Go to NHS 111 Online website <https://111.nhs.uk/> , or
* Call 119

**2. Test for whether you have had the virus infection in the past.**

This test is open to NHS staff and care home workers, and some patients in care.

It requires a blood sample from a vein in your arm.

* This looks for the body’s reaction to the virus. It is called Antibody test.
* This test is useful if you once had symptoms, but was not tested for the virus antigen at that time.
* The test is best done at least a month after the symptoms – the immune system takes two to four weeks to develop antibody. (By that time the virus antigen has disappeared.)
* Some people catch the virus but have little or no symptoms. If you are one of them, this test can also show you had caught the virus some time ago.

**To request this test:**

* Ask your NHS workplace, or
* Ask your GP surgery (Your GP will have to refer you to the hospital and you may need to show you work in the NHS or a care home)

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\* A word about vocabulary

To make this easier to read, we have used the word ‘Coronavirus’ above. Technically, there are many different Coronaviruses. The particular virus that is causing the pandemic is SARS-CoV-2 or nCov-2019. The disease it causes is called Covid-19. Really, they are pointing to the same thing.