

## Symptoms, Tests and Self-Isolation – Important information for parents and carers

Thank you for all your efforts to date to try to reduce the spread of Covid-19 infection in our community. Whilst there is more 'light at the end of the tunnel' that life can return to a newer kind of normality during this year, we are not there yet and need your help to keep going for longer.

We all want to protect ourselves and our loved ones from Covid-19. To do this we need your help please, by following all the advice on what to do if you or your family have symptoms, which kind of test to use when, and what is meant by self-isolation and close contacts.

### Key Messages for Parents and Carers

There are two types of tests for Covid-19:

**Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Test** - for people who have symptoms and for anyone told to get one to confirm a positive LFD test result

**Lateral Flow Device Test (LFD)**- for people who do not have symptoms

- ✓ You and the people you live with must self-isolate immediately, if you have a positive result from either type of test used.
- ✓ If an LFD test gives a positive result for Covid-19, a PCR test must be arranged to confirm the result.
- ✓ If a secondary school pupil tests positive with an LFD test taken under supervision at school, they **must** isolate and book a confirmatory PCR test.
- ✓ Your child can return to school if they have a negative PCR result **only** if this was taken within 2 days of the positive LFT test, and they are not already isolating because you have been told that they are a 'close contact' of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19.
- ✓ The self-isolation period for anyone who test positive for Covid-19 is **at least** 10 full days. You will be advised of the actual dates by NHS Test and Trace.
- ✗ If your child is displaying symptoms or feels unwell, they **must not** attend school even with a negative test result.
- ✗ **Do not** send your child to school if you have been advised that they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, even if your child has had a negative LFD or PCR test. They must complete the full 10 days of isolation.
- ✓ The self-isolation period for anyone who has been in close contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, is 10 full days. Your child's school will confirm these dates with you.
- ✓ If you need support with self-isolation Newcastle City Council's Welfare and Wellbeing Team may be able to help you. Go to [www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfare](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfare) or call 0800 170 7001 or 0191 277 8000 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm Saturday) to get the support you need.
- ✓ If you or your child is required to self-isolate, you may be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment. See <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure/public-health-services/coronavirus-covid-19-6>
- ✓ Always follow the 'Hands, Face, Space and fresh air' rules

Book a PCR test at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or Tel: 119 (7am-11pm)

## Detailed Information

### Tests for Covid-19

There are two types of tests for Covid-19 and it is important to use the correct one.

**Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) Test** - for people who have symptoms and for anyone told to get one to confirm a positive LFD test result

**Lateral Flow Device Test (LFT)**- for people who do not have symptoms

### PCR Tests

PCR tests are for people who have **symptoms** of coronavirus (Covid-19). A follow up or confirmatory PCR is also required for anyone testing positive through LFD testing.

If you or your family have at least one of these 3 Covid-19 symptoms you must seek a PCR test:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- you've lost your sense of smell or taste or it's changed

You can also book a PCR test if you've been asked to get a test by a local council or contact tracers or have tested positive using a LFT.

You can book a free PCR test online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by telephone 119 (7am – 11pm). You must book a test appointment in advance – you cannot just turn up at a test centre. Most people get their result the next day, but it may take up to 3 days.

If you have symptoms, you and everyone you live with **must** immediately self-isolate. Do not leave home until you get your test results, except to post a test kit or to go to the PCR test appointment.

Anyone without any symptoms who has tested positive with a Lateral Flow device **must** book a PCR test to confirm the positive result.

If a negative confirmatory PCR test is obtained by anyone who used an LFD at home, the individual and their household can leave self-isolation.

If a negative confirmatory PCR test is obtained within two days of the positive LFD test taken at a supervised centre (e.g. school), the individual and their household can leave self-isolation. However, if the confirmatory PCR test is taken too late, the individual who received a positive LFD at a supervised centre, and their household, will need to self-isolate for the full 10 days.

### Lateral Flow Device Tests

Lateral flow device tests (LFD) are for people who **do not have symptoms** of Covid-19 (asymptomatic). One in three people who have Covid-19 are asymptomatic.

LFD testing is an important control measure in helping to protect yourself and others from contracting or transmitting the virus.

**In schools**, LFD's help to identify and isolate staff and pupils, so they do not unknowingly pass on the virus to others. Most secondary school pupils and staff in all types of schools, are taking part in voluntary LFD testing at home twice per week.

**At home**, any adult in England can choose to take part in voluntary LFD testing twice per week. You can find out more about this programme [online](#). These tests should be used **by adults** in the household only and are **not advised** to be used by primary school aged or younger children.

If the LFD result is **positive** you and everyone you live with must immediately [self-isolate](#). You must then get a PCR test to confirm the positive result. **Do not** leave home until you get your test results, except to post a test kit or go to a PCR test appointment.

If a **negative** confirmatory PCR test is obtained by anyone who used an LFD **at home**, the individual and their household can leave self-isolation, returning to school or work.

If a **negative** confirmatory PCR test is obtained by a secondary school pupil within two days of the positive LFD test taken under **supervision at school**, the pupil and their household can leave self-isolation returning to school or work. However, if the confirmatory PCR test is taken too late, the pupil who received a positive LFD at the supervised school centre, and their household, will need to self-isolate for the full 10 days.

However, even with a negative test result, if your your child feels unwell, they **must not** attend school.

**It is important to note that a negative LFD result does not rule out Covid-19 infection, particularly in the early stages of infection when viral loads are lower. However, LFD testing twice weekly is a reliable measure of infection.**

Anyone displaying symptoms of Covid-19 must arrange to have a PCR test. An LFD **must not** be used on symptomatic people.

Anyone who has been told to self-isolate must **complete the full self-isolation period**, even if they have tested negative with an LFD test during the isolation period.

If you are told by your child's school, that they must self-isolate because they are a close contact of somebody who has tested positive for Covid-19, it is **very important** that they complete the full isolation period. They **must not** return to school during the isolation period even if they have had a negative PCR or LFT test result. This is because it can take 10 days to develop Covid-19.

Further information on testing: [NHS testing information](#)

## Self-Isolation

Self-isolation is when you **do not leave your home** because you have or might have Covid-19. This helps stop the virus spreading to other people.

It's a legal requirement to self-isolate if you test positive or are told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. You could be fined if you do not self-isolate.

#### Self-isolate immediately if:

- ✓ you have any [symptoms of coronavirus](#) (a high temperature, a new, continuous cough or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste).
- ✓ you have tested positive for coronavirus.
- ✓ someone you live with has symptoms or tested positive.
- ✓ someone in your support bubble has symptoms and you've been in close contact with them since their symptoms started, or during the 48 hours before they started.
- ✓ someone in your support bubble tested positive and you've been in close contact with them since they had the test, or in the 48 hours before their test.
- ✓ you've been [told](#) you've been in contact with someone who tested positive
- ✓ you arrive in the UK from a country with a [high coronavirus risk](#)

If your child's school has told you that they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, **they must self-isolate for 10 full days**. The school will confirm the isolation dates with you. They **must not** return to school during this time, even if they have tested negative for Covid-19 with either an LFD or PCR test. The rest of the household do not need to self-isolate.

#### Self-isolation rules

- ✗ Do not leave your home or garden (if you have one)
- ✗ Do not go to work, school, or public places – work from home if you can
- ✗ Do not go on public transport or use taxis
- ✗ Do not go out to get food and medicine – order it online or by phone, or ask someone to bring it to your home
- ✗ Do not have visitors in your home, including friends and family – except for people providing essential care
- ✗ Do not go out to exercise – exercise at home or in your garden, if you have one

Anyone with [symptoms](#) of Covid-19, must stay at home and self-isolate immediately.

Anyone who has a positive test result, but does not have symptoms, must stay at home and self-isolate. Their household needs to isolate too. This includes any children.

The self-isolation period includes the day symptoms started or the day you had the test, if you do not have symptoms, and the next 10 full days. Anyone you live with also needs to self-isolate at the same time. **This applies for both PCR and LFD tests.**

You may need to self-isolate for longer if you get symptoms while self-isolating or your symptoms do not go away; see [how long to self-isolate](#).

If you test positive with an LFD, you must isolate and arrange to have a PCR test to confirm the result. If positive, continue to follow self-isolation rules. Do not take an LFD test at home during this time.

If you receive a negative PCR but are displaying symptoms or feeling unwell, 'think Covid' and continue to isolate. Seek advice from your medical practitioner.

### Support to Self-Isolate

If you need support with self-isolation Newcastle City Council's Welfare and Wellbeing Team may be able to help you. Go to [www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfare](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfare) or call 0800 170 7001 or 0191 277 8000 (8am-8pm Monday to Friday, 9am-3pm Saturday) to get the support you need.

You can access the welfare and wellbeing checklist <https://bit.ly/3kOK6l0> to ensure you have all the information and support needed to start your self-isolation period

If you or your child is required to self-isolate, you may be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment. See <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure/public-health-services/coronavirus-covid-19-6>

### PCR Test Centres in Newcastle

All PCR tests **must** be booked in advance.

To book go to <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or Tel: 119 (7am-11pm)

You will be asked to give your postcode and the nearest available PCR test centre will normally be offered.

More information on testing can also be found on the Newcastle City Council website at <https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/public-health-wellbeing-and-leisure/public-health-services/coronavirus-covid-19/our-18>