**Lateral Flow Antigen Testing For COVID-19 For Patient-Facing Staff**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is lateral flow antigen testing?**

Lateral flow antigen testing detects the presence of the COVID-19 viral antigen from a swab sample. The test is administered by handheld devices producing results in 30 minutes and can be self-administered.

**What type of test is being rolled out?**

The Innova SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Qualitative Test.

**What does asymptomatic staff testing mean?**

Asymptomatic means someone who has no symptoms of a disease, in this instance COVID-19. Evidence has shown that people with COVID-19 can have no symptoms and still transmit the virus to others without being aware. It is important that we take steps to reduce the risk of transmission by identifying those who may not know that they have the virus, therefore staff without symptoms of COVID-19 will be tested.

**What is the principle of the test device?**

The test is performed on a nasal swab. After swabbing the inside of the nostrils, the swab is inserted into an extraction tube with extraction fluid, then rotated and pressed to make sure that the sample from the swab is released into the extraction fluid (the swab is discarded at this point). The extraction buffer is optimised to release SARS-CoV-2 virus antigens from the swab if present.

**Who is the test available to?**

Testing is being prioritised based on clinical need and will be made available to all staff in patient-facing roles including Engie, Joint Hospital Group (South), Bank Partners colleagues and volunteers. The test is not currently available to staff working in non-patient facing, corporate functions, in-line with national guidance.

**How are “patient-facing” staff defined?**

Staff who are patient-facing refers to staff involved in direct interaction with patients

**Should I continue testing after I have had the vaccine?**

Yes, continue to test even though you have had the vaccine

**I am Agency or Bank staff, should I get tested?**

Yes, this applies to all patient-facing staff, including agency and bank staff

**Is testing voluntary?**

All testing is voluntary, however we strongly encourage all patient-facing staff to test themselves to help keep patients, themselves, loved ones and colleagues safe

**How do I perform the test?**

If you find the original SARS-CoV-2 Antigen Rapid Qualitative Test Instructions for Use (IFU) enclosed in the box by the manufacturer, please ignore these. These instructions were intended for testing symptomatic patients by laboratory staff. Instead refer to the separately provided **Guide for healthcare staff self-testing for coronavirus using a Lateral Flow Device (LFD).**

**How frequently should the test be done?**

Testing should be undertaken twice weekly, every 3-4 days. There is a dedicated weblink below which provides a helpful guide and tutorial video. This is also where all results should be uploaded (positive, negative or invalid). As a minimum you will need to enter your surname, date of birth and test result.

**www.porthosp.nhs.uk/testing**

The antigen test is intended for screening asymptomatic patient-facing staff only. You should not use this antigen test if you have developed COVID-19 symptoms, since the antigen test may be false-negative and therefore provide false reassurance.

Please perform the test twice weekly on the following days, according to your surname:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Twice weekly testing routine** | **Mon** | **Tue** | **Wed** | **Thu** | **Fri** | **Sat** | **Sun** |
| **A-C** | Yes |  |  | Yes |  |  |  |
| **D-G** |  | Yes |  |  | Yes |  |  |
| **H-K** |  |  | Yes |  |  | Yes |  |
| **L-N** |  |  |  | Yes |  |  | Yes |
| **O-R** | Yes |  |  |  | Yes |  |  |
| **S-V** |  | Yes |  |  |  | Yes |  |
| **W-Z** |  |  | Yes |  |  |  | Yes |

**How long does the test take?**

The test should take no longer than five minutes to undertake, with a 30-minue wait for results

**What will the test tell me?**

The results will show one of the following:

* **Negative** – the presence of only the control line (C) and no test line (T) with the result window indicating a negative result
* **Positive** - the presence of the test line (T) and the control line (C) within the result window, regardless of which line appears first, indicating a positive result. The presence of any test line (T), no matter how faint, indicates a positive result
* **Invalid** – if the control line (C) is not visible within the result window after performing the test, the result is considered invalid

**Results**

Once you have completed your test, please upload the results to:-

[www.porthosp.nhs.uk/testing](http://www.porthosp.nhs.uk/testing)

**All** results should be uploaded – positive, negative or invalid. This website also has a helpful video to help with using the test kit.

**What happens if I get a positive result?**

If you test positive with a lateral flow test, you are required to inform your line manager and contact the Staff Support Line to report your absence from work and book in for a confirmatory PCR swab test. The Staff Support Line can be contacted on 023 9228 6496 between 6:30am and 7pm daily.

Please also isolate as set out in the [Government guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection):

* If you do not have symptoms but have tested positive for COVID-19, stay at home and self-isolate for 10 days from the day the test was taken. If you develop symptoms after your test, restart your 10-day isolation period from the day the symptoms start.
* Stay as far away from other members of your household as possible, especially if they are [clinically extremely vulnerable](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19). Avoid using shared spaces such as kitchens and other living areas while others are present and take your meals back to your room to eat.

**If I am told to isolate by Test and Trace even though I have had the vaccine, do I need to do so?**

Yes, continue to take advice and follow instructions given by Test and Trace

**If I have a positive PCR test when should I start the lateral flow device tests again?**

If you have a positive PCR test, you do not need to self-test using the lateral flow device test for 90 days from the date you became positive.

**If I have a negative PCR test when should I start the lateral flow device tests again?**

I you have a negative PCR test please restart the lateral flow tests again immediately.

**What happens if the confirmatory PCR test is negative?**

You can resume work and your household no longer needs to self-isolate, as long as you remain asymptomatic.

**If I test positive, what does this mean for my family/people I share a house with?**

All members of your household should self-isolate for 10 days from the day your test was taken. However if any member of your household develops symptoms of COVID-19 they should isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms, in-line with the Government [stay at home guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection).

**What happens if my test result is invalid?**

If this is the first time, please repeat all steps using a new swab and new test cartridge, taking care that you follow all the steps in the correct order as described in the Guide. If the repeat test is again invalid, the batch is likely to be faulty. Return the box to the quiet study area near the Education Centre on E Level (lift area 1) stating the reason, request a replacement box, and repeat the test with the new test kit.

**What happens if my lateral flow test is negative but I have COVID-19 symptoms?**

If you have COVID-19 symptoms please refer to the NHS guidance and get a PCR test.

You and anyone you live with should stay at home and not have visitors until you get your test result – only leave your home to have a test.

Anyone in your support bubble should also stay at home if you have been in close contact with them since your symptoms started or during the 48 hours before they started.

**What should I do with used tests?**

You can safely dispose of the test items in your normal household waste but you should pour any residual buffer solution away first

**What happens if the buffer solution is accidentally consumed?**

As set out in the manufacturer’s safety instructions, the buffer solution is not hazardous. However if it is accidentally ingested a medical practitioner should be informed.

**Will this testing regime remove the need for staff who have been exposed to a positive COVID-19 case to self-isolate?**

No. Government self-isolation advice should be followed at all time. This test does not remove the need to self-isolate should you need to.

**Can 10-day isolation following contact tracing by shortened through the use of this testing?**

No. 10 day isolation following notification that a staff member has been in close contact with a COVID-19 case without relevant PPE should be followed as per Test and Trace advice. Testing with lateral flow antigen tests are being used in pilot sites to verify whether daily testing might lessen the need to isolate, but this is not currently the advice and isolation should be followed per instructed by Test and Trace

**Can I use this test for my family members?**

No. Family members who have symptoms should access the more sensitive and specific virus nose-throat swab PCR tests in the normal way.

**Can these tests be used for patients?**

PCR tests should continue to be used for patients.

**If I test positive, will this be classed as sick leave?**

Absence following a positive test will be recorded as Covid-19 confirmed sick leave.  You will be paid as though you were at work, including enhancements.

**If I need to self-isolate, will I still be paid?**

Yes. In-line with previous guidance developed by NHS Employers, of you hold a permanent NHS contract or are employed on a Trust bank you will still be paid as though you were at work, while self-isolating.

**What if I work for a contractor, will I still be paid?**

Your employer is responsible for determining your pay if you need to self-isolate or develop COVID-19 symptoms during or after a period of self-isolation and become unwell

**If I work for an agency, will I still be paid?**

The agency is responsible for determining your pay if you need to self-isolate or develop COVID-19 symptoms during or after a period of self-isolation and become unwell

**I cannot afford to be away from my workplace, how will the Trust support me?**

In-line with guidance developed by NHS Employers, if you hold a permanent NHS contract or are employed on a Trust bank, pay you receive for self-isolation or if you become unwell with COVID-19 is based on the pay you would normally receive if you were at work.

**ENDS**