

# What does my Covid-19 test result mean?

Information for patients.

## If you have a **NEGATIVE** result

### Q. My nose/throat swab is **NEGATIVE** for COVID-19, what does this mean?

A negative result means that there is **NO** evidence that you currently have COVID-19 infection.

- If you have been self-isolating or social distancing before your surgery or a procedure this result means the surgery/procedure can go ahead, so please attend the hospital as planned.
- If you have been told to self-isolate or are already self-isolating due to contact or exposure to a COVID-19 positive case, please follow the guidance and complete the required period of self-isolation/quarantine. Please inform the hospital if this is the case using the information on your appointment letter.

### Q. My test result is **NEGATIVE** but I have new respiratory symptoms, loss of sense of smell or taste and/or fever.

Please do not come to the hospital if you have any new COVID-19 symptoms, contact the department arranging your surgery or procedure to let them know and further advice will be given.

## If you have a **POSITIVE** result

### Q. My test result is **POSITIVE** for COVID-19, what does this mean?

This means you have a current COVID-19 infection and you should be considered infectious to others and therefore should self-isolate in accordance with current government advice. You are considered infectious to others from 48 hours before your symptoms start until 10 days after symptom onset.

You should not attend the hospital for your planned surgery or procedure. The clinical team will be in touch to give you advice about re-arranging the appointment.

There are a number of steps you should now take to ensure you keep yourself and others safe:

- You need to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the start of your symptoms.
- Following a positive test result, you will receive a request by text, email or phone to log into the National NHS Test and Trace service website and provide information about recent close contacts. Please be as open and honest about any exposed contacts with both Test and Trace teams.
- After 10 days, if you still have a temperature you should continue to self-isolate and seek medical advice. You do not need to self-isolate after 10 days if you only have a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste, as these symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone.
- If you are not experiencing symptoms but have tested positive for COVID-19, you must self-isolate for at least 10 days, starting from the day the test was taken.
- If you develop symptoms during this isolation period, restart your 10-day isolation from the day you developed symptoms. You could be fined if you do not stay at home and self-isolate following a positive test result for COVID-19 or if you are contacted by NHS Test and Trace and instructed to self-isolate.
- Try and stay as far away from other members of your household as possible. It is especially important to stay away from anyone who is clinically vulnerable with whom you share a household.
- Reduce the spread of infection in your home by washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds using soap and water, or use hand sanitiser, and cover coughs and sneezes.
- If you live with others, all other household members must stay at home and not leave the house for 10 days. The 10-day period starts from the day when the first person in the household became ill or if they do not have symptoms, from the day their test was taken. If anyone else in the household starts displaying symptoms, they must stay at home for at least 10 days from when their symptoms appear, regardless of what day they are on in their original 10-day isolation period.
- Consider alerting people who you do not live with and have had close contact with after you developed symptoms and in the 48 hours before symptom onset, to let them know you have symptoms of COVID-19.

**If you feel you cannot cope with your symptoms at home, or your condition gets worse, then use the NHS 111 online COVID-19 service. If you do not have internet access, call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.**



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