

New campaign urges public to get tested twice a week

- Public will be urged to take the 'next step safely' and start regular testing, as part of new campaign across TV, print, outdoor and digital media
- Assets will be made available to workplaces and community spaces to encourage a new testing habit

From today (Friday 9 April) everyone in England will be able to access free, regular, rapid COVID-19 testing.

Alongside the roll-out of the vaccine, regular testing is an essential part of the easing of restrictions, helping identify variants and stopping individual cases from becoming outbreaks. Anyone can now access free, rapid lateral flow tests for themselves and their families to use twice a week, in line with clinical guidance.

To encourage people to get into the habit of using lateral flow tests twice a week, a major public information campaign is launching which will run across TV, radio, press, digital, out-of-home advertising and social media, with the TV advert airing for the first time on ITV at around 7:15pm on Friday 9 April.

The campaign explains that rapid lateral flow tests show results in under 30 minutes, and by taking them we can take the 'next step safely', protecting our loved ones, customers, workmates and friends as we continue to cautiously ease restrictions. It also demonstrates how people can fit these free, rapid tests into their morning routine to help create the new testing habit that will help to get us back to normal life.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Around 1 in 3 people have coronavirus without any symptoms, so getting tested regularly is one of the simplest and easiest ways we can keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. I'd encourage everyone to take up the offer and test twice a week.

Alongside the successful roll-out of the vaccination programme, rapid testing will be one of our most effective weapons in tackling this virus and ensuring we can cautiously reopen our economy and parts of society that we have all missed.

The British people have made a tremendous effort throughout the pandemic and I am confident they will do the same now by taking up this offer of free, rapid tests.

Around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not experience any symptoms and may be

spreading the virus unwittingly. Rapid testing detects cases quickly, meaning positive cases can isolate immediately, and by making rapid tests available to everyone, more cases will be detected, breaking chains of transmission and saving lives.

From Sunday 11 April, the 'Hands, Face, Space, Fresh Air' campaign will update to remind the public of the need to use the NHS COVID-19 app to check in to premises, including outdoor hospitality, hairdressers and gyms. This will run across digital, social, radio and out-of-home channels.

Improvements to the venue check-in journey mean all members of a party will either have to check in using the NHS COVID-19 app or leave manual contact details. Users who have been at a venue where multiple people tested positive will now be encouraged to book a test, as well as monitoring their symptoms to further prevent asymptomatic transmission.

TV doctor and practising NHS GP Dr Zoe Williams said:

Twice-weekly testing will be crucial in helping us manage the spread of the virus as society starts to reopen. The tests are quick and easy to do, and results come back in 30 minutes. Key workers such as myself and my colleagues have been carrying these out for the last few months, and it's amazing how quickly they have become second nature to us.

However, it's important to remember that there is not one silver bullet in the fight against COVID-19, and even with a negative test result, we must still follow social distancing guidelines – hands, face, space, fresh air, and go for our vaccines when called.

Recent analysis from NHS Test and Trace shows that for every 1,000 rapid lateral flow tests carried out, there is fewer than one false positive result. Rapid lateral flow tests detect cases with high levels of virus and are very effective in finding people who do not have symptoms but are very likely to transmit the disease.

Getting a rapid test is quick and convenient. Regular, rapid testing will be delivered through:

- a [home ordering service](#), which allows people to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to their home
- workplace testing programmes, on-site or at home
- community testing, offered by all local authorities
- collection at a local polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test site during specific test collection time windows
- testing on-site at schools and colleges
- collection from participating pharmacies

If testing at home, individuals will need to register their results online or by calling 119. They should self-isolate if they get a positive result and order a confirmatory PCR test.

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 – a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – should book a PCR test online or by calling 119.

From Monday 12 April, people who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive with COVID-19 can now get a PCR test during their 10-day self-isolation period, whether or not they have symptoms.

Getting a test when you're a contact helps to find if you're one of those people and, if so, to ensure your contacts are self-isolating. This is how we break the chains of transmission. Even if you test negative, you will still need to complete your 10-day self-isolation period because the virus can incubate for that time.