

# Self-isolation for COVID-19 cases reduced from 10 to 7 days following negative LFD tests

People who receive negative LFD results on day 6 and day 7 of their self-isolation period – with tests taken 24 hours apart – will no longer have to self-isolate for the full 10 days. The first test must be taken no earlier than day 6 of the self-isolation period.

Those who leave self-isolation on or after day 7 are strongly advised to limit close contact with other people in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces, work from home and minimise contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID- 19.

There is no change to the guidance for unvaccinated contacts of positive COVID-19 cases, who are still required to self-isolate for 10 full days after their date of exposure to the virus.

Analysis by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) suggests that a 7-day isolation period alongside 2 negative lateral flow test results has nearly the same protective effect as a 10-day isolation period without LFD testing for people with COVID-19.

The new approach reflects latest evidence on how long cases transmit the virus for, and supports essential public services and supply chains over the winter, while still limiting the spread of the virus.

Studies also demonstrate that LFD tests are just as sensitive at detecting the Omicron variant, as they are for Delta.

Existing public health measures remain in place including:

- staying at home if you feel unwell
- get a test if you experience any COVID-19 symptoms
- wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces
- work from home if possible
- maintain social distancing and regular hand washing
- take up the offer of the free COVID-19 vaccine

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of UKHSA, said:

COVID-19 is spreading quickly among the population and the pace at which Omicron is transmitting may pose a risk to running our critical public services during winter. This new guidance will help break chains of transmission and minimise the impact on lives and livelihoods. It is crucial that people carry out their LFD tests as the new guidance states and continue to follow public health advice.

As always, we urge everyone who is eligible to get their booster jab without delay, wear a mask in crowded spaces, on public transport and in shops, wash your hands regularly and ventilate rooms well. If you have any COVID-19 symptoms stay at home and get a PCR test as soon as possible.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Sajid Javid said:

We want to reduce the disruption from COVID-19 to people's everyday lives.

Following advice from our clinical experts we are reducing the self-isolation period from 10 days to 7 if you test negative on a LFD test for 2 days running.

It's vital people keep playing their part by testing regularly and isolating if they test positive. And I urge you to Get Boosted Now to protect yourself and those around you.