

Trial of rapid coronavirus test launched in Hampshire

- Trials of a new coronavirus test returning results in just 20 minutes will begin in Hampshire today
- The test has been shown to be highly effective in clinical settings and will now be trialled in a number of A&E departments, GP testing hubs and care homes in Hampshire
- Up to 4,000 people of all ages and backgrounds will be tested

The trial of a new, rapid coronavirus test will begin in Hampshire today.

The new test, which has been proven effective in clinical settings, does not need to be sent to a laboratory to be processed and can return results within 20 minutes.

The test will be rolled out to a number of A&E departments without access to laboratories, GP coronavirus testing hubs and care homes across Hampshire.

Receiving results on site will mean people with symptoms will be given immediate certainty as to whether or not they have the virus. This will mean they can rapidly follow advice to stay at home if they test positive, or return to work.

Up to 4,000 people of all ages and backgrounds will participate in the pilot, which will run for up to six weeks. It will be led by Hampshire Hospitals NHS Trust. Trained health professionals will take a swab and process the results on site.

Hampshire Hospital NHS Trust will work closely with local authorities to identify priority care homes to visit and test.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

This new test could provide accurate results almost on the spot. This will enable health and care workers to carry on with their shift or immediately isolate on the same day, and could eventually offer the same benefit to the whole country.

This could change the way that we control COVID-19 across the country, getting those with negative results back into society as quickly as possible.

I am hugely grateful for everyone in Hampshire for making this innovation possible.

In contrast to the widely used PCR tests, which need be processed at different temperatures, the loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP)

swab test does not require a change in temperature to detect results. This means it can be processed on site instead of being sent to a laboratory.

Validation for the LAMP test using RNA extract has already been carried out in a clinical setting at Hampshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Following a successful clinical trial, the rapid test will then be rolled out more widely if the pilot in Hampshire proves effective.

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Chief Executive Alex Whitfield said:

We are tremendously excited to be able to support the government's efforts for ever more accessible, faster coronavirus testing.

That we are able to do so is a testament to the hard work and ingenuity of our entire microbiology department, from clinical scientists and the laboratory team to volunteers from academia and industry as well as the staff on the wards.

We are very much looking forward to the results of this trial and the benefits it will bring to the community we serve.

The study will run for up to six weeks and will be rolled out nationally if effective.

In contrast to the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) technology, in which the reaction is carried out with a series of alternating temperature steps or cycles, LAMP is an isothermal amplification that is carried out at a constant temperature and does not require a thermal cycler. This means it can be processed on site.

The 4,000 people tested in this pilot will contribute to the daily testing figures.

In A&E departments and GP hubs, individuals with symptoms will be prioritised for testing. All staff and residents will be tested in care homes whether they are symptomatic or not.

Coronavirus GP hubs are selected GP sites that are dedicated for patients with coronavirus symptoms. The purpose of this is to protect other patients who are visiting the GP for other reasons.

[Everyone in the United Kingdom with symptoms now eligible for coronavirus tests.](#)

The COVID-19 LAMP assay test was developed by UK manufacturer Optigene and will be used in the Hampshire pilot.