

An Introduction to Rapid Self-Testing for COVID-19

The importance of testing

The ultimate aim of testing is to break the chain of transmission of COVID-19. As many as one in three people with COVID-19 show no signs of having it, that is they are 'asymptomatic'.

Testing helps us to identify and isolate more asymptomatic people who test positive and are therefore, more likely to spread the virus, at the same time as minimising disruption for those who test negative.

The benefits of self-testing

Self-testing for COVID-19 is simple, quick and can be carried out at home without the need to attend a test centre or post samples to a lab for analysis.

How the device works

The self-test kits are lateral flow devices. The device detects the presence or absence of COVID-19 by applying a test sample to the device's absorbent pad. The sample runs along the surface of the pad showing a visual positive or negative result. Results are ready in 30 minutes. Tests come in packs of 7.

What you need to do



Receive or collect the test package



Carry out the test
[Watch How To Video](#)



If you test **positive**, you should book a confirmatory PCR test. This can be done via <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

We would advise visiting a community or drive through test site as this is the quickest way to get tested, or you can order a home test kit. It is important that you self-isolate until the result of your PCR test.



If you test **negative**, no further action is required until the next test, but remain vigilant to COVID-19 symptoms.

If the test is **void** (invalid) please take another test as soon as possible.

It is very important that you read the comprehensive [Step-by step guide](#) that comes with the test kit. There is also an additional infographic [How to Do a Rapid COVID-19 Self-Test](#) for your information. Tests should be conducted twice a week, 3 to 4 days apart, and preferably at the beginning of the day.

To report your result you need the barcode on the test strip (or the ID number under it). You must report your result either online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result or call **119** (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). Please also report your results to your employer.

Thank you

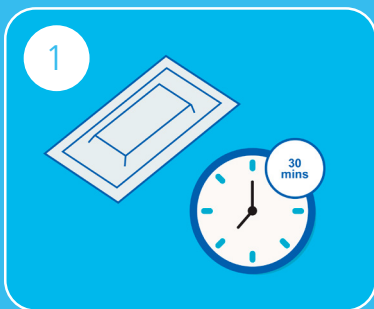
On behalf of NHS Test and Trace, may we take this opportunity to thank you for participating in this crucially important drive to make your school and local community safer, and to return to life as close to normal as possible. For further general help on self-testing please visit our [FAQs](#) or Department of Education coronavirus (England) helpline on **0800 046 8687** (Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 6pm).

How to Do a Rapid COVID-19 Self-Test

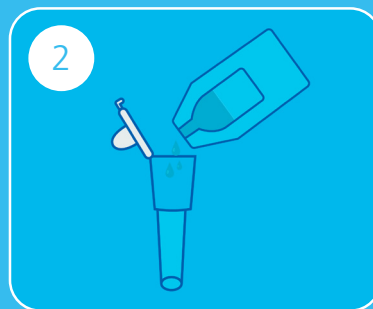
Instructions before starting

- Wait at least 30 minutes after you last ate or drank anything before starting the test
- Don't start it if you've had a nosebleed in the past 24 hours
- If you have a piercing, swab the nostril on the other side. If both sides are pierced, remove jewellery
- If you can't take a throat swab (for example if you've had a tracheostomy) swab both nostrils instead
- Before you start wash your hands for 20 secs in soap and warm water or use sanitiser
- Use a clean, flat surface and, if doing more than one test, make sure to sanitise your hands each time

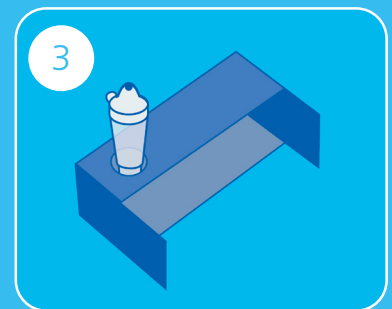
Preparing your test



Read the instructions that came with your kit carefully. Take the test strip out of its pack and place it onto the cleaned flat surface. Once opened, start the test within 30 minutes.



Twist or snap open the extraction buffer sachet, being careful not to spill any of the fluid. Open the tube and pour in all the fluid from the sachet.



Close the extraction tube cap and place the filled tube in the tube holder.

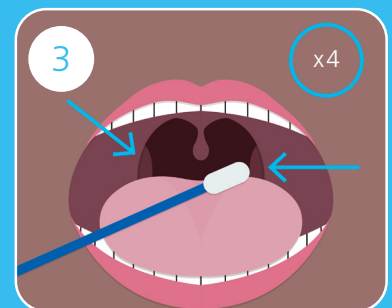
Doing your test



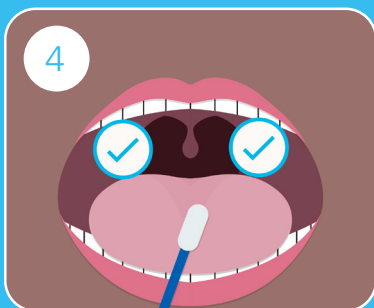
Blow your nose, wash and dry/sanitise your hands again. Remove the swab being careful not to touch the soft part.



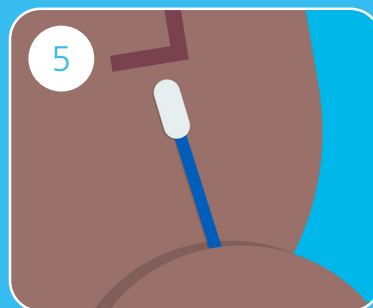
Open your mouth wide and use a mirror to locate your tonsils (or where they used to be).



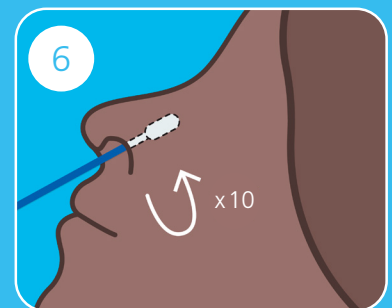
Do this firmly 4 times on each side. Use a mirror to help you do this correctly.



Remove the swab carefully without touching your teeth, tongue or gums.



Insert the same swab inside your nostril until you feel resistance, making sure you don't touch any other part of your face.

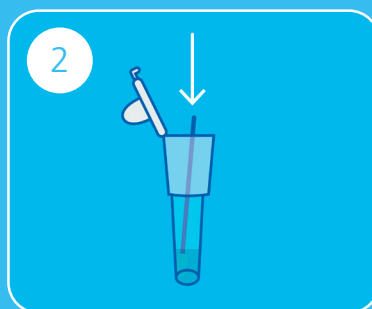


Roll the swab firmly around the inside of the nostril, making 10 complete circles.

Processing your test



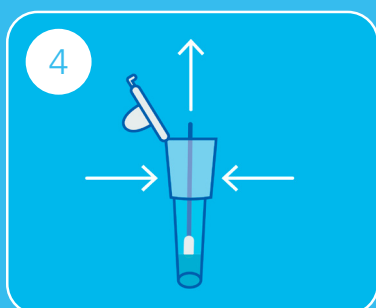
1 Pick up the tube, open the lid and place the fabric tip of the swab into the tube so it is in the fluid.



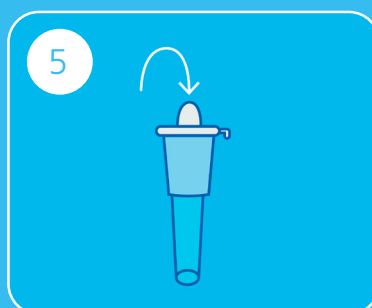
2 Press the tip against the edge of the tube with force.



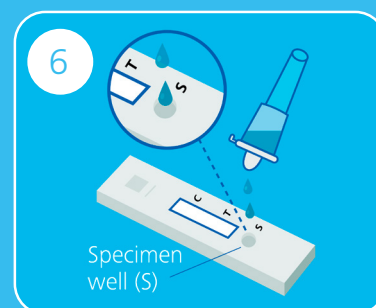
3 Roll the swab around the tube for 15 seconds. It is important to mix thoroughly.



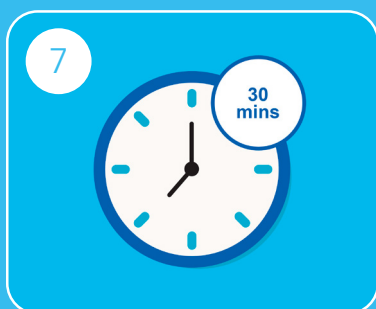
4 Pinch the tube as you remove the swab to make sure that all the fluid is removed then dispose of the swab in the waste bag provided



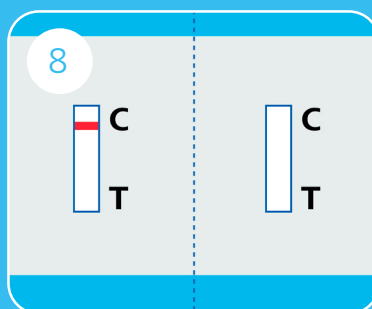
5 Press the nozzle cap tightly on to the tube to avoid any leaks.



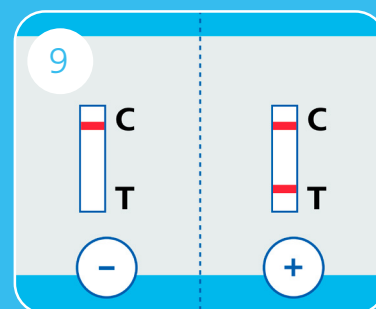
6 Gently squeeze the extraction tube to place 2 drops of the fluid onto the specimen well marked 's' on the test strip.



7 Make sure that you are dropping fluid and not an air bubble. Set a timer for 30 minutes.



8 Within 10 mins, you should see a line at 'C'. If C line is not visible within 30 mins, the test is invalid.



9 If after 30 minutes you still have only one line, your result is negative. If you have two lines, then your result is positive.

Now report your result

To report your result you need the barcode on the test strip (or the ID number under it).

You can report your result either online at www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result or call **119**.