

COVID Testing Communication for GP bulletin and public 11.9.20

STARTS

COVID-19 Testing - Public Message

Local authorities and the local NHS understand the frustrations of residents who are struggling to get local COVID-19 tests, and are urging people only to get tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms or have been officially advised they need to get tested.

There is a national shortage of laboratory capacity to analyse tests, with demand currently outstripping supply, which has meant that some local residents have not been able to access tests via the national programme at nearby testing sites or postal home testing kits. Demand for testing is increasing and priority is being given to areas of concern (those with more COVID-19 cases), which means areas with a lower number of cases are having less capacity.

In a bid to help reduce demand, local authorities are asking that only people with COVID-19 symptoms, or those who have been advised by an official organisation, like the NHS or a local authority, apply for a test.

COVID-19 symptoms include:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

The advice to the public is:

- If you do not have symptoms please do not apply for a test, this will help to reduce the demand.
- If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, you should isolate and seek a test by phoning 119 or booking a test online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. If you do have symptoms and can't get access to a test locally via this route, please do try again in a couple of hours as more local slots may have opened up in that time.
- If you have been identified as a contact of a COVID-19 case, then you should isolate for 14 days. 14 days covers the incubation and infectious periods of the infection. You do not need a test unless you have symptoms but if you do have a test and it comes back negative, you still need to isolate for the whole period. The same applies if you are isolating having returned from overseas.

For further information and guidance please go to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

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