

Visitor (Later Flow Device) COVID-19 Testing Guidance Notes

Overview

Visiting someone in a hospice is vital for families to maintain contact with their loved ones and contribute to their support and care. To support visiting and help to minimise the risk of spreading the virus, particularly as the new variant is more easily transmitted, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is rolling out new rapid COVID-19 tests to hospices. This has enabled hospices to undertake regular testing of visitors alongside staff members.

While testing visitors can reduce the risk associated with visiting, it does not completely remove the risk of infection. When used alongside robust infection prevention and control (IPC) measures such as personal protective equipment (PPE), it can support hospices to safely maintain a balance between infection control and the vital benefits of visiting to the wellbeing of patients.

Relatives have a very important role and responsibility to help hospices keep their loved ones safe. Please think of yourself as part of a team with the hospice staff. By carefully following the steps described below you will be playing your part in helping to protect not just your loved one, but all the other patients and staff from the risk of contracting COVID-19.

As part of the precautions being taken at the hospice, visiting is restricted to immediate family only and each patient can have 1 visitor for 1 hour a day. This hour visit will either follow a test or be during the other allocated visiting hours currently in place. Please read this visitors guidance carefully so that you know what to expect for your visit, as well as the precautions the hospice will ask that you take to keep your loved ones and all their patients and staff safe.

Do I have to be tested in order for me to visit my relative?

Yes - Testing is really important to help us to identify people who might have COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms. This also includes Children under 18 years of age. Testing may not identify everyone that is currently infectious, but alongside wearing PPE and following other infection prevent and control measures, testing helps us to keep the hospice and your loved ones safe.

If you have any queries or questions about the testing process we are more than happy to answer them but if you do not wish to have the test then unfortunately we will not be able to allow you to visit due to the associated risks to your relative and to other patients and staff.

You will be asked to undertake a test every 3 days if you are visiting regularly. You must have a negative test within 72 hours of a visit – i.e. if you are visiting less frequently you are likely to need a test each time you visit.

Preparing for your visit

To keep your loved one and the hospice safe, we ask that you please follow the below guidelines:

- stay home if you're feeling unwell, including if you have a fever, a cough or a change in your sense of taste and smell
- follow national guidance outside of your visit, including limiting your contact with other people and wearing a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet – i.e. when food shopping
- observe social distancing with anyone outside of your household or bubble and wash your hands regularly

Booking a time for your test

To arrange a test please call **07843 452 715**. 45 minute slots are available from 9am in the morning until 2.15 Monday to Friday. If required, a small number of slots are available at 8am. Tests have to be booked in advance and due to demand cannot be guaranteed at a certain time. If you wish to visit over the weekend you will need to have a test on the Thursday or Friday. If you are visiting with a child you can both be booked in to the same slot.

On days when you do not require a LFD test, visiting hours are 2.00pm – 3.00pm, 3.30pm – 4.30 pm and 6.00pm – 7.00pm. At all times visiting is limited to 1 visitor per patient a day for 1 hour.

On the day of your visit

You'll be asked to take a test using a new technology called a lateral flow device (LFD) test. You'll be tested before visiting your relative to check if COVID-19 can be detected. Lateral flow testing is not a fool proof solution: it should be taken in addition to PPE and other IPC measures and must not be seen as a way of relaxing their use.

For this, the hospice will ask you to do a throat and nose swab every 3 days and will let you know your result in 30 minutes. You will be asked to complete the swabbing yourself. A swab is a small piece of soft, absorbent material on a plastic stick that is used to take a sample from your nose and throat.

The test is very straightforward and you'll be supported throughout the process by a trained member of staff at the hospice.

Key steps during the test

When you first arrive at the hospice

- we ask that you report to the hospice main reception
- the hospice will provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and support you with putting it on. This will include gloves, mask and apron. Further information on putting on and taking of PPE is on page 2 of the guidance notes
- a staff member will sign you in and direct you to the testing area

Taking your test

- you will be taken in to a dedicated clinic room
- you will be asked to confirm that you have no symptoms of COVID and have not recently had COVID yourself
- You will be asked to sign a consent form that you agree to taking the test and sharing your result. Registering your test result is important because it links you to your individual test kit. You will need to sign the consent form each time you have a test
- a member of staff will hand you a packaged swab
- you will then need to take your own throat and nose swab, supervised by a member of staff. They will talk you through how to swab yourself which will only take about 30 seconds to do. Instructions on how to take your swab are also available on page 4 of these guidance notes
- once you have handed over the swab, you will be asked to wait for 30 minutes for the test result.

Receiving your result

- after 30 minutes, a staff member will tell you your result
- once you have received your result, you will need to register your test kit online utilising the QR code provided with your own mobile device. If you are not able to register your own result, a member of staff can help you but they will need to take your personal details.
- further guidance on how to register your result is on page 5 of these guidance notes
- your test result will be reported to the wider NHS Test and Trace program.

If you are visiting with a child you will need to sign an additional consent form and will be asked to undertake their test and register their result. A member of staff will help you if required.

Understanding your test result

The result will affect whether you can complete your visit in the following ways:

- **Negative** – your visit will be able to go ahead, as long as you comply with all other infection prevention measures. It is possible that you may still have COVID-19, so the hospice will need to make sure you wear PPE at all times and ensure that the visit takes place in a safe way. If you have any questions about this, please ask the staff member. You will be given a test result slip as evidence that your result was negative. This will also include the date your next test is due.
- **Positive** – unfortunately you will not be able to visit. You will have to take a second test, which is a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test that the hospice will provide for you. You will have to take the test and register it on site, then go home immediately and self-isolate until you receive your result. NHS Test and Trace will text, email, or call you with your result in around 72 hours. If you test positive, NHS Test and Trace may contact you to ask you for your close contacts.
- **Invalid** – the hospice will ask that you take another LFD test. If the retest comes back as invalid, you will not be able to visit. The hospice will offer you the PCR test and you will need to go home and await the result of this test. If it is negative you will need to contact the hospice again to arrange a visit. At this time you will need to provide evidence that you have received a negative test result.

If you are visiting with a child and one of your tests is positive, neither of you are able to visit. You will both have to undertake a PCR test and self-isolate until you receive your test result.

During your visit

It is important to recognise that a negative test will provide us with some assurance that you are not carrying the virus. However, the test is not a complete guarantee. To keep your loved one and the hospice safe, we ask that you please follow the guidelines below during your visit.

Inside the hospice, wear your face covering and any other PPE that you will be asked to wear by a member of staff. Please continue to follow their visiting policy.

After putting on your PPE you will need to show your negative test result to the ward clerk on entering the ward. If you visit on days you do not need a test you **must** bring this with you to show at the main reception as you will not be able to visit without it.

What you can do during your visit

Holding hands and personal contact are allowed if you have a negative test result and PPE, but visitors should minimise contact as much as possible to reduce the risk of transmission. During your visit, please make sure:

- you keep your PPE on at all times
- you only go to the part of the hospice that is permitted for your visit
- you follow carefully any guidance and instructions provided by hospice staff

Instructions for putting on PPE

1. Perform hand hygiene using soap and water or alcohol hand gel.
2. Put on a plastic apron, making sure it is tied securely at the back.
3. Put on a surgical face mask, positioning upper straps on the crown of your head, lower strap at nape of neck. With both hands, mould the metal strap over the bridge of your nose.
4. Put on plastic gloves.
5. You are now ready to go to the hospice testing area.

Instructions for removing PPE safely

1. Remove gloves; grasp the outside of the cuff of the first glove and peel off, holding the glove in the gloved hand, insert the finger underneath and peel off second glove.
2. Snap or unfasten apron ties the neck and allow to fall forward. Snap waste ties and fold apron in on itself, not handling the outside as it is contaminated, and put into clinical waste.
3. Remove surgical mask carefully, and put into clinical waste.
4. Perform hand hygiene using soap and water or alcohol hand gel or rub.

Self-swabbing instructions

You may remove your face covering to self-swab

1. Using a mirror to help, look inside your mouth, and find your tonsils at the back of the throat. Your tonsils or where they would be (if they had not been removed) are where you will swab your sample.
2. Gently blow your nose into a tissue. Throw the used tissue into the clinical waste bin provided. This is so that you get rid of excess mucus.
3. Use hand sanitiser to clean your hands. This is so that you do not contaminate the test kit.
4. A member of staff will hand you a packaged swab. Identify the soft, fabric tip of the swab.

5. Peel open the package from the handle-side of the swab and gently take it out. This will be used for both the throat and nose. Do not touch the soft tip of the swab.
6. Holding the swab in your hand, open your mouth wide and rub the fabric tip of the swab over both tonsils (or where they would have been) at the back of the throat with good contact at least 3 times (use a mirror to help you do this). Carefully remove the swab stick from the back of your throat.
7. Put the same end of the same swab gently into one nostril until you feel a slight resistance (about 2.5cm or 1 inch up your nose). Roll the swab 5 times along the inside of the nostril.
8. After collecting the sample hold the swab up right in your hand, do not put it down, and notify a staff member. Be careful not to touch any surfaces with the swab.
9. You are ready to hand back your swab. Use hand sanitiser after handing your sample back to the member of staff.

Do not touch your tongue, teeth, cheeks, gums, or any other surfaces with the fabric tip of the swab. The swab is invalid if it touches these parts, and you will need to get a new swab. If this happens, ask a member of staff for assistance.

How to register your test kit

Once your result is determined, your test kit needs to be registered online straight away using a self-test registration form via the QR code provided. You can complete this using your own mobile phone or a staff member will input the information for you. If a staff member supports you they will ask you to provide some personal details that are required to complete the form.

Details needed for the online registration form

- full name
- date of birth
- gender
- ethnic group
- home address
- contact details (including mobile number and email address)
- the code number of your test kit
- date and time of your test
- test result

Once your result is inputted, you will follow the appropriate guidance as set out in this guidance.

How your data will be used by the Hospice

Your personal data such as name and contact number will be collected by LOROS so that we can record who has had, and who requires a test. Your test result will be shared with LOROS staff so that a decision can be reached on whether or not you are able to visit the patient. We will need your consent to carry out the test and share your result with the member of staff at the testing area. These details will be kept for 12 weeks before being securely destroyed.

The personal details that you input into the online form when you register your results are not kept or seen by LOROS, unless you require help from LOROS staff to complete the form. For details about what happens to the data you enter onto the online registration site, please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-privacy-information>