



# How to test yourself for coronavirus (COVID-19) before you go to hospital

**Important:** If you have to go into hospital for a procedure, you need to take a coronavirus (COVID-19) test first.

This is to make sure you are not ill. You must do your test exactly 3 days before the day that you go into hospital.

You can find the date in the letter from the hospital.

## Before you start

- Read the instructions carefully
- After you have taken your Coronavirus test, it is important that you self-isolate until you go to hospital

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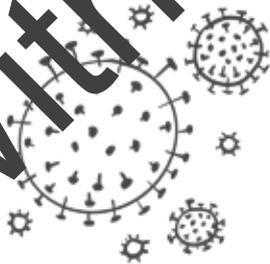
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# 1 Introduction



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care



This guide comes from the Department of Health and Social Care.

It tells you:

- what to do when you get your test kit.
- how to test yourself for coronavirus.

Coronavirus is an illness that is spreading around the world. Lots of people call it COVID-19.



We have a test for coronavirus.  
You can do the test on yourself.

You need to do the test and then **self-isolate** for 3 days before you go to hospital to make sure you are not ill.



**Self-Isolate** means:

- you must stay in your home.



- you cannot go near other people from outside your home, unless they are your carer.

Withdrawn 11 May 2022



## Coronavirus

You can have coronavirus and not feel ill.



Some people are very ill with it.



## Coronavirus symptoms

You may get a high temperature and a cough.



You might not be able to taste or smell things.

## 2 Check test kit contents



1 Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.



2 Clean and dry a surface and place the home test kit contents on it.

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If anything in your kit is broken or missing, call the hospital straight away.



Swab, inside sealed wrapper



Leak-proof bag



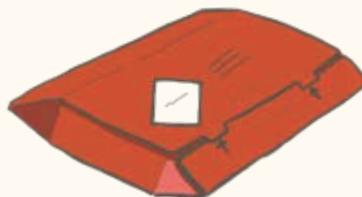
Plastic tube, containing a small amount of liquid



Security seal, for the return box



White absorbent pad



Return box with pre-paid Royal Mail return label

### 3 Find a priority postbox



Check collection times at your nearest Royal Mail priority postbox. It has a priority postbox sticker on it.



You can find your nearest priority postbox by going to:

[www.royalmail.com/services-near-you](http://www.royalmail.com/services-near-you)

Click the "Show my nearest priority postboxes" box and enter your postcode.



After you have done your test, you will need to post it in a priority post box before 12pm.



**If you cannot get to a priority post box, call the contact centre on 0800 0511 811.**

**You should call the contact centre 4 days before you are going to hospital.**

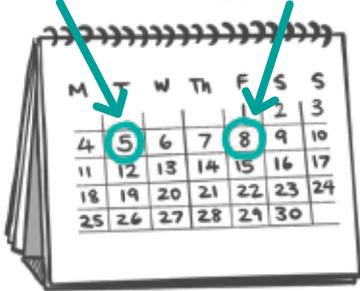
The contact centre will tell you

- when to take your test
- how to book a courier

## 4

## Prepare to test

Take test      Hospital day



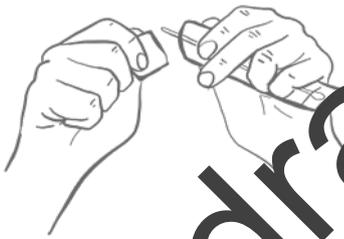
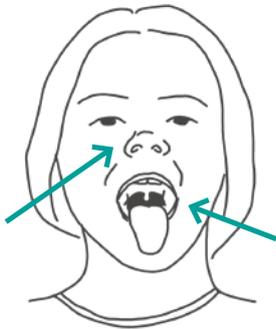
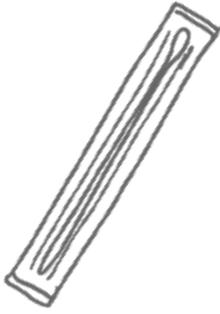
Take your test **3 days** before you go to the hospital.

The test is nothing to worry about. It will be very quick and it will not hurt.

Clean and dry a surface. Then unpack everything from the test kit onto it.

If you have a runny nose, you will need to blow your nose with a tissue before taking the test.

Before you take the test, wash your hands with soap and water.



You will take a test from your throat and your nose using a **swab**.

A **swab** is like a large cotton bud.

You will use the same swab for both your throat and your nose.

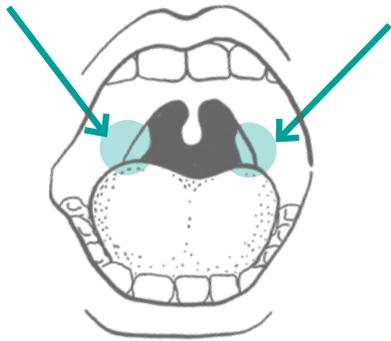
**If you cannot swab your throat,** you can swab both nostrils instead.

Open the package and gently take out the **swab**.

**Be careful not to touch the tip of the swab with your fingers.**

Do not let the tip of the swab touch other surfaces or it could mix up your results.

## 5 Throat swab



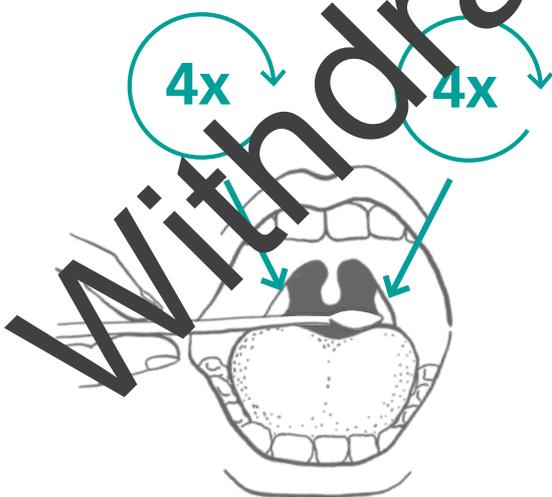
Look inside your mouth and find your **tonsils**. Your **tonsils** are the soft parts at the back of your throat.

You need to open your mouth and stick out your tongue.

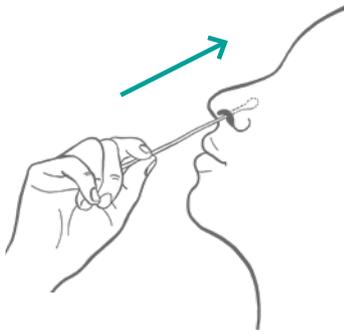
Use the swab to take a sample from you throat.

Gently rub the swab over the soft part at the back of your throat for **4 times on each side**.

It may be a bit uncomfortable and may make you gag, but it will not hurt.



## 6 Nose swab



Use the same swab to take a sample from your nose.  
If one of your nostrils is pierced, swab the other nostril.

Put the swab into your nostril and push it gently upwards.

It will not hurt and it will not go too far up.

10x



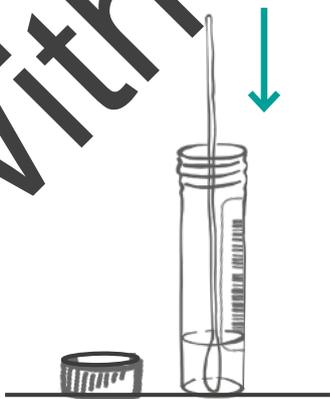
Gently turn the swab for **10 complete circles.**

This will not hurt but may be a bit uncomfortable.

If you did not swab your throat, now swab the second nostril.

Put the swab into the **plastic tube**.  
The **plastic tube** is a small jar filled with a little liquid.

Make sure the liquid stays in the tube.





Snap off the stick end of the swab so that it fits into the plastic tube without bending.

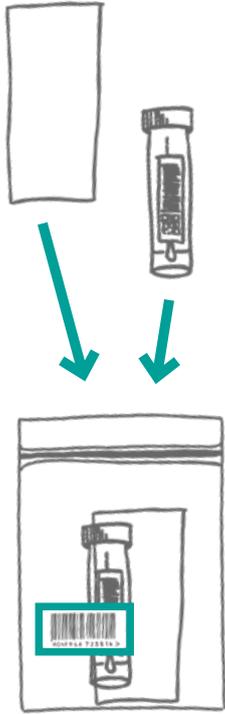


Screw the lid of the plastic tube back on tightly and check it is on correctly.



That is it, well done.  
Now you need to pack it up, so it is ready to post.

## 7 Pack up your test



An **absorbent pad** is a small piece of soft fabric.

Place the plastic tube and absorbent pad together into the **leak-proof bag**.

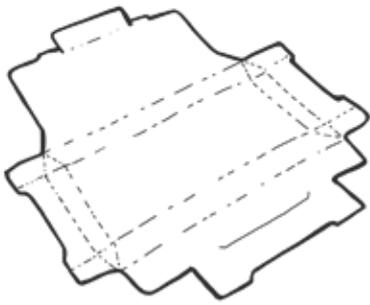
The leak-proof bag will have a barcode on it.



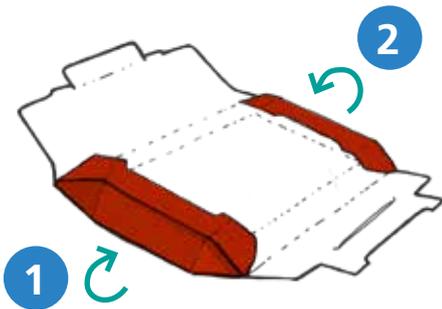
Let some air out of the bag.

Then take the strip off the top of the bag. There is a sticky area underneath.

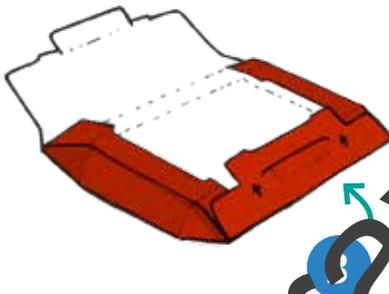
Press the top of the bag together to close it.



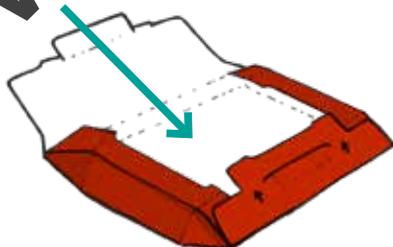
Make up the cardboard box.



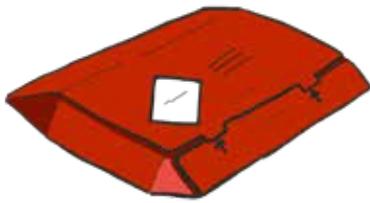
First, fold the sides towards the centre.



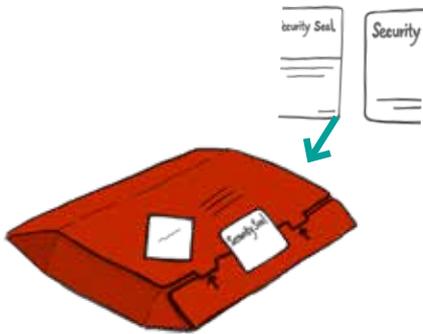
Then, fold the bottom part of the lid towards the centre on top of the sides.



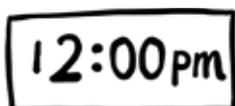
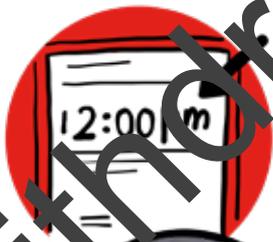
Put the bag inside your cardboard box.



Fold the top part of the lid and push it into the bottom part to close the box.



Tape it shut with the security seal.

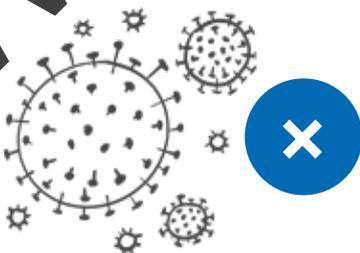
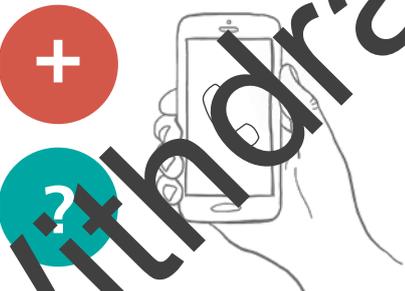
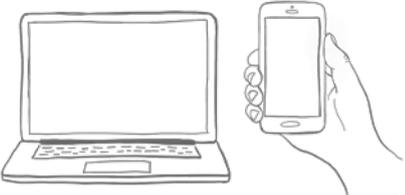


After you have done your test, you will need to post it in a priority post box before 12pm.

## 8 Get your test results



Test Day



You will not know the test results straight away. It will be sent off to a lab for testing.

**You must self-isolate until the day you go to hospital.** You will have to wait for your test results. This may take up to 2 days.

You will get your test results by text. Your hospital will also get your results by email.

**If the test is positive or unclear**  
Call your hospital to talk about what to do next.

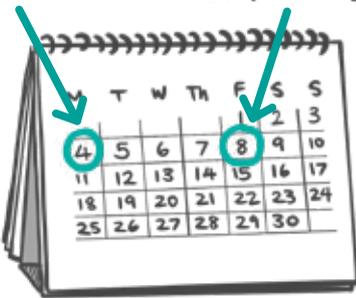
**If the test is negative**  
It means that the test did not find coronavirus. You need to continue isolating until you go to hospital.

## 9 Book a courier

If you are not able to post your completed test kit in a priority postbox, you can book a free collection.



Book courier      Hospital day



8:00AM - 4:00PM

A **courier** is a person who picks up your test kit and takes it to the lab.

You need to book your courier **4 days before you go to the hospital.**

To book your courier, call **0800 0511811** between 8am and 6pm.

You will need your Royal Mail barcode.

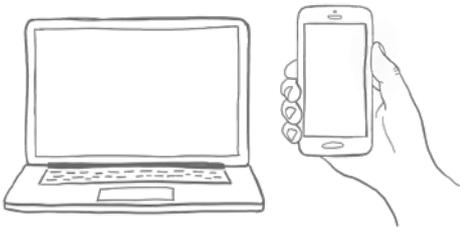
Your courier will come between 8am and 4pm the next day, so you need to take your test by 7am.

## 10 For more information



If you need more information, go to:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-livingservicesduring-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-livingservicesduring-coronavirus-covid-19)



If you have any questions about your coronavirus test, call:

**0800 0511811**

Lines are open **7am to 11pm** every day.

If you feel worse, or you do not get better after 7 days:

- visit NHS 111 online at [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk)
- or call **111**

