



# COVID-19 Pre-hospital test instructions

**Important:** You must do your COVID-19 swab test exactly 3 days before the day of your procedure, which you can find on your hospital letter.

Test kit barcode:

Barcode

## Before you start



30  
minutes

Do not eat or drink for at least 30 minutes before doing your test to reduce the risk of spoiling the test

Once you have taken your COVID-19 home test, please continue to self-isolate until your procedure unless your hospital advises you differently.

- Read these instructions carefully, use the checklist and timetable to help you follow the correct timing for each step.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds before you handle the test kit.
- To understand how we use your data, and to access additional support guidance, along with an easy read version and multiple language translations of this booklet, visit [www.gov.uk/dhsc/test-before-hospital](https://www.gov.uk/dhsc/test-before-hospital)
- Keep this booklet as a record of your test.

# What you need to do and by when

It is very important that you take the time to understand this page and follow each step at the correct time shown below.

Section	When to complete each step and what you need to do	Page
<b>1</b>	<b>As soon as you receive your test kit.</b> Check test kit contents.	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>As soon as you receive your test kit.</b> Find your nearest Royal Mail priority postbox or contact <b>0800 0511 811</b> to book a courier and follow instructions.	<b>6</b>
<b>3 to 5</b>	<b>3 days before the day of your procedure, at 7am</b> Prepare, take and package the swab sample.	<b>8 to 13</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>On the day you take your test, which is 3 days before the day of your procedure.</b> Post your completed test kit or await courier collection.	<b>14 to 15</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>By midday the day before your procedure</b> Receive your test result by text.	<b>16</b>

**Warnings** Failure to follow the instructions in this booklet may affect the performance of the test and invalidate the test results. Do not use if package arrives damaged or missing components. Device is for single use only. Keep out of the reach of children. These kits are only designed for human use. Do not use excessive force, pressure or bending when collecting swab samples as this may result in accidental breakage of the swab shaft. Clean spills from the plastic tube using household bleach or disinfecting wipes. Get medical advice if the solution is accidentally swallowed or comes into contact with the skin, mouth or eyes.

# Timetable

Circle the day of your procedure and use this timetable to help work out the correct day to take your test and return it.

Circle the day of your procedure (top line) and then look down the table to find out which day to take your test and return it:

Circle day of your procedure →	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
3 days before the day of your procedure - step 3,4,5,6	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur

If you are returning your test kit on a Sunday, you must return it via courier.

Please contact 0800 0511 811 as soon as you receive your test kit to book your courier.

The test is suitable for the following people:

Adults aged 16 and over → Self-test (unless unable to do so)

Teenagers aged 12 to 15 → Self-test with adult supervision

Children, 11 and under → Adult to test (see page 8 for tips on how to test a child)

**Precautions** If you have problems with your hands or vision, you may need someone to assist you with the swabbing and testing process. If you have a nose piercing swab the other nostril. If pierced on both sides, remove the piercing on one side before swabbing. If there is a reason you cannot take a throat swab, swab both nostrils instead. Avoid eating or drinking for at least 30 minutes before doing the test to reduce the risk of spoiling the test.

# 1. Check test kit contents

As soon as you receive the kit

Wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds using soap and warm water or hand sanitiser before handling the test kit to avoid contaminating it.

**You will need:** tissues, surface cleaner, hand sanitiser or soap and access to warm water.



- 1 Read this instruction guide carefully.



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



- 3 Wash your hands with soap and warm water or hand sanitiser for 20 seconds.



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# Check test kit contents

As soon as you receive the kit

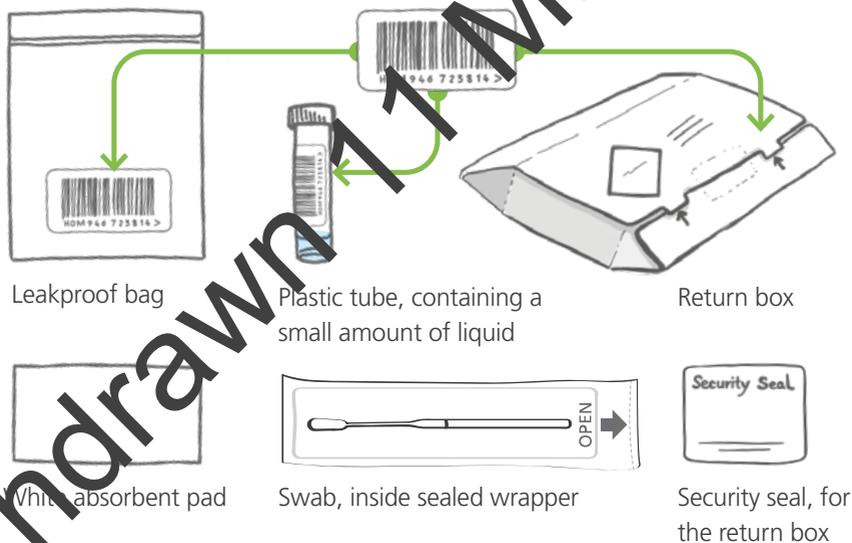
4

Your test kit should have these items:

An 11-character barcode on the outer bag, plastic tube, leakproof bag and return box. Make sure the barcode is the same on all these items. If the barcode differs on these items call **0800 0511 811**.

Check the use-by date [00/00/0000]. Do not use the test device after its use-by date.

**Note** that some components may differ from the picture.



## WARNING



### What to do if something is damaged, broken or missing

If anything is broken or missing, call **0800 0511 811** as soon as possible and they will advise on the next steps to take.

## 2. Find your nearest Royal Mail priority postbox or contact 0800 0511 811 to book a courier.

As soon as you receive your test kit



**Important:** As soon as you receive your test kit, check collection times at at [royalmail.com/priority-postboxes](https://royalmail.com/priority-postboxes). You need to post your completed test kit by midday.

As weekend and bank holiday collection times may differ from weekdays it is important to look at collection times for the day you will be sending back your test (3 days before the day of procedure). If you cannot locate a priority postbox with a collection on that day, or you are returning your kit on a Sunday, book a courier by calling **0800 0511 811**.

Visit [royalmail.com/services-near-you](https://royalmail.com/services-near-you)

Click the 'Show my nearest priority postboxes' tickbox.

Enter the postcode of where you are staying and select the address.

View priority postboxes near you.

If you return your kit on a Saturday, you can see weekend collection times by clicking on 'more information'. If you return your kit on a Sunday, this must be done by courier even if it states there is a Sunday collection.

### If you cannot get to a priority postbox or you are returning your test kit on a Sunday

Call the contact centre **0800 0511 811** to find out when to take your test and how to book a courier collection if you are:

- returning your test kit on a Sunday
- unable to get to a priority postbox without using public transport
- unable to follow the government's guidelines
- returning your kit on a Saturday or bank holiday and the priority postboxes near you do not offer weekend collections

# If you cannot post your kit in a priority postbox.

Contact 0800 0511 811 to book a courier as soon as you receive your test kit



To book your courier, call 0800 0511 811 as soon as you receive your test kit, between 8am and 6pm.



Your courier will arrive between 8am and 1pm on the day of collection.

If you are returning your test using a courier, take your test by 7am on the day of collection to give yourself enough time before the courier arrives.

If your test kit is not collected by 1pm or you missed your courier, call **0800 0511 811**.

**Precautions** If you have problems with your hands or vision, you may need someone to assist you with the swabbing and testing process. If you have a nose piercing swab the other nostril. If pierced on both sides, remove the piercing on one side before swabbing. If you have had a nosebleed within the last 24 hours, swab the other nostril. If there is a reason you cannot take a throat swab, swab both nostrils instead. Avoid eating or drinking for at least 30 minutes before doing the test to reduce the risk of spoiling the test.

### 3. Prepare to do the test on yourself or someone else.

Check the day you need to take the test (refer to table on page 3)

**Important:** Take your test by 7am three days before the day of your procedure

#### Prepare to take the sample

Do not eat or drink for at least 30 minutes before doing the test to reduce the risk of spoiling the test.

If you are doing the test on a child or someone else, talk through the steps together. Remain calm and confident as you go through the process.

(For UK home test kits, exact models may vary).

#### Tips for testing a child

- Some children may feel more comfortable sitting on a care giver's lap.
- Read the advice, COVID-19 in children, on page 18 of this leaflet.

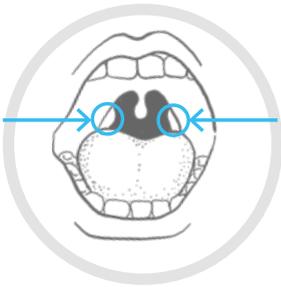
Try to explain the test to the child in words they can understand.



**Important:** Contact the hospital where the procedure will take place if you cannot do the test.

## 4. Take a swab sample

3 days before the day of your procedure



- 1 Look inside the mouth and find the tonsils (or the area where they would be if you do not have them) at the back of the throat. This is where you'll take the swab sample.

**Tip for a child:** If you cannot swab their tonsils, swab both of their nostrils 4 times on each side instead.  
*Note: The result may be less accurate.*



- 2 Gently blow the nose into a tissue so excess mucus does not spoil the test.

Throw the tissue away in a bin.



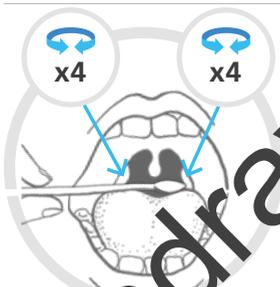
- 3 Wash your hands thoroughly for **20 seconds** using soap and water or hand sanitiser before handling the test kit to avoid contaminating it.

**20**  
seconds



- 4 Open the package at the stick end and gently take out the swab. You will need to use this for both tonsils and nose.

**Important:** Try not to touch your tongue, teeth, cheeks, gums, or any other surfaces with the swab's fabric tip, as this may spoil your sample. If this does happen, complete and return the test anyway.



- 5 Hold the swab in your hand, open your mouth wide and tilt your head back. Gently rub the fabric tip of the swab over both tonsils (or where they would have been).

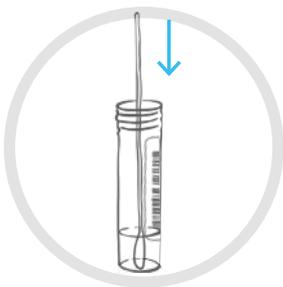
Do this with good contact 4 times on each side. Carefully remove the swab.



- 6 Put the same end of the same swab gently into the nostril about 2.5cm (1 inch) or until you feel some resistance (this will be less for a child). Roll the swab firmly around the inside of the nostril, making 10 complete circles and slowly remove it. If you have a nose-piercing, use the other nostril.

**Important:** This may feel uncomfortable. Do not insert the swab any deeper if there's a feeling of strong resistance or pain.

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**7** Unscrew the lid from the plastic tube, while keeping it upright so the liquid stays inside.

Put the swab into it with the fabric tip facing down.



Snap off the stick end of the swab, so that it fits inside the tube without bending.

Securely screw the lid on so no liquid can leak.



**Important:**  
The liquid must stay in the tube.



✗  
Lid not secure



✗  
Bent stick



✗  
Too short



✓

# 5. Package the test kit

3 days before the day of your procedure



1

Wash your hands thoroughly for **20 seconds** using soap and water or hand sanitiser.



2

Make sure the barcodes on the plastic tube and the leakproof bag match.

Place the absorbent pad into the leakproof bag.

Put the tube next to the absorbent pad in the same bag.



3

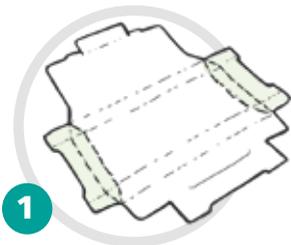
Let some air out of the leakproof bag and then seal it using its adhesive seal.

Make sure that is is sealed properly.

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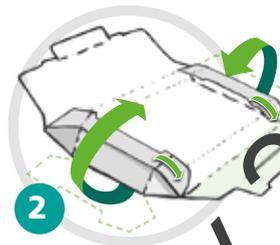
# How to assemble the return box

3 days before the day of your procedure



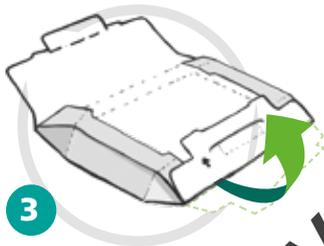
1

Follow the assembly instructions on the return box. If you can, wipe down the bag and box with an antiseptic wipe.



2

Fold both the sides upwards and inward towards the centre.



3

Fold the bottom part of the lid upwards the centre on top of the sides.



4

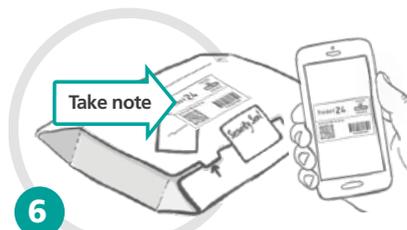
Put the sealed leakproof bag containing the plastic tube and absorbent pad into the box.



5

Close the box.

Apply the Security seal as shown to close the box securely.



6

Take a picture or note of the barcode, so you can track the delivery. You are now ready to post your test kit.



Dispose of any remaining test kit parts in your household waste.

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# 6. Post your completed test kit or wait for your courier collection.

3 days before the day of your procedure



Post the completed test kit by midday 3 days before the day of your procedure. If posting on a Saturday or bank holiday, post no later than 1 hour before the last collection time. (weekend and bank holiday times may differ from weekdays).

Only use a Royal Mail priority postbox with the label and one of these NHS logos:



**PRIORITY  
POSTBOX**



Follow the latest government guidelines, wear a mask and do **not** take public transport. You must **not** enter any Post Office with your test kit.

Some priority postboxes have a Sunday collection. They'll show one of these labels:

**PRIORITY POSTBOX  
SATURDAY  
& SUNDAY**

**BLWCH POST BLAENORIAETHOL  
DYDD SADWRN  
A DYDD SUL**  

---

**PRIORITY POSTBOX  
SATURDAY  
& SUNDAY**

Track your delivery using your Royal Mail return label barcode at

[www.royalmail.com/track-and-trace](http://www.royalmail.com/track-and-trace)

# Giving a completed test kit box to the courier

3 days before the day of your procedure. This is only required if you are unable to post your test kit in a priority postbox or are returning your test kit on a Sunday.

**Important:** 3 days before the day of your procedure: your courier will arrive between 8am and 1pm

Make sure you are ready with your completed test during this time. Do not place the return box outside until the courier arrives. Do not take the return box to the Post Office.



The courier will knock on your door or ring your doorbell and then move at least 2 metres away.



After they move away, open your door, place the return box outside and then close the door.

The courier will deliver your test kit box to a laboratory.

## Collection problems?

If your test kit is not collected by **1pm** or you missed your courier, call **0800 0511 811**.

## 7. Get test result by text

1 day before the day of your procedure



You should receive your result by text before midday on the day before your procedure.

Your hospital will also get the result by email.

If you do not receive your result by text, call your hospital.

### What to do after getting your result

- If the result is negative, please continue to self-isolate until your procedure unless your hospital advises you differently.
- If your result is positive or unclear, call your hospital to discuss what to do next.

## Help and contact details.

### **Have you been harmed or had a reaction while using this kit?**

If you are harmed by a device, reporting it could help others.

Please go to: <https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk>

Only use this website to report injuries and reactions.

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## COVID-19 in children

Get more advice about coronavirus in children at:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children)

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### **Get help if you are worried**

- Visit NHS 111 online [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk) or call **111** :
- if you, or someone you live with, gets worse over the next few days or your symptoms do not get better after 7 days
- if you are worried about a baby or child who is ill



### **Call 999 in a medical emergency**

- if you think there is something seriously wrong
- if the baby or child seems very unwell or is getting worse
- Do not delay getting help if you are worried. Trust your instincts
- Visit [www.111.nhs.uk/service/COVID-19](http://www.111.nhs.uk/service/COVID-19) to check if you have coronavirus symptoms and find out what to do next

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## Help and contact details

### Contact phone number

If you have any questions about your COVID-19 test kit, or if you want to book a courier, call **0800 0511 811**

Lines are open 7am to 11pm every day (free for mobiles and landline).

Supply of this device is only permitted as part of the DHSC deployment under the NHS Test and Trace programme.



Manufactured for: Department of Health and Social Care, 39 Victoria Street, Westminster, London, SW1 0EU.

### Index of symbols



Temperature limit



Caution



Date of Manufacturer



Do not re-use



Lot number



Use-by date



Manufacturer



In vitro diagnostic medical device



Keep away from sunlight



Consult instructions for use



Keep dry



Do not use if package is damaged



Biological substance category B

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