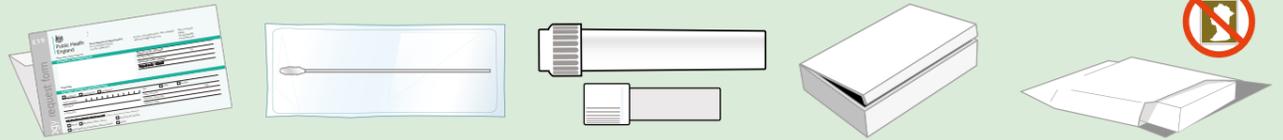# How to take a combined throat and nose swab | Postal version

To test for coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) we need two samples, one from the back of your throat and then from inside the nose with the same swab.

Both tests are commonly used by doctors and nurses but you can take both samples safely yourself.

The testing kit you have received contains everything you need to take the samples:

- a request form
- one swab – this is like a long cotton bud. The kit also contains a small collection tube which you will use to hold the complete swab tip
- a larger white screw topped tube which is used to transport the small collection tube containing the swab
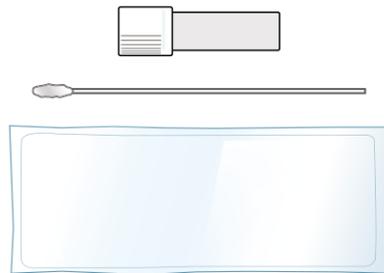- a cardboard box
- a plastic envelope with pre-paid postage.

It is very important that you attach the label with your name and date of birth (if there is one) or write this on the small collection tube.
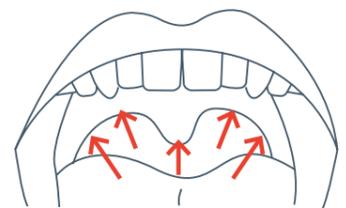
1 Prepare to take throat sample

Please wash your hands carefully before you start.

Then unpack the kit onto a clean surface.

A. First take the throat swab. Open the swab packet which contains the small bottle and pull out the swab.
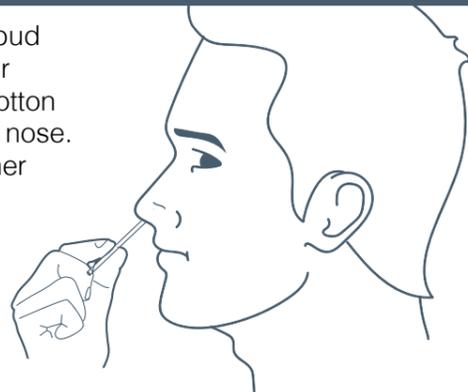
B. Wipe the soft tip of the swab around the back of your throat as shown in the diagram. Stand in front of a mirror. Open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue – you will see an arch at the back of your mouth. Try to swipe the soft tip of the swab across the five areas in the picture as below.

Rub the swab several times across the very back of your throat, behind the arch. This may make you gag but should not be painful.

Ensure you also swab the sides of the arch where your tonsils protrude.
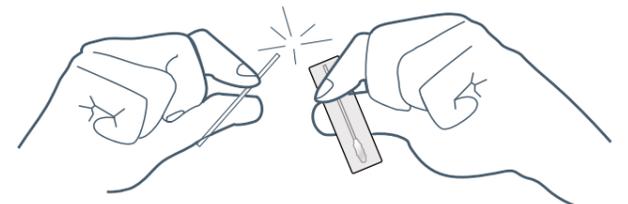
Try to avoid swabbing your tongue and teeth.

2 Next, take the nose sample

A. Place the tip of the cotton bud gently JUST inside one of your nostrils and gently wipe the cotton bud around the inside of your nose. Please repeat this for your other nostril using the same swab.

No force is needed and you do not have to push far into your nostril.

B. Once you have taken the swab, place the soft tip of the swab into the collection tube and break off the plastic end (at the breaking off point where the swab stick is thinner). Replace the lid on the bottle.

Please avoid touching the cotton bud tip with your hands (before or after the swabbing) to avoid contamination.
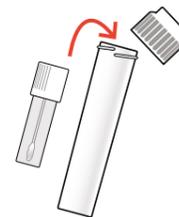
3 Finally, pack the samples

A. Wash your hands again.

B. Write your name, date of birth and today's date on the outside of the small collection tube with the swab. This is very important. Your GP may include sticky labels.
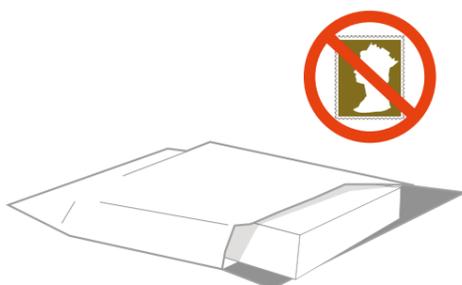
Name
Date of birth:

C. Place the small tube inside the large white screw topped lid contained and close the lid tightly. Place the white top container into the cardboard box.

D. Make sure the request form details are correct and place inside the box.

E. Place the box into the plastic envelope. Postage has been pre-paid by PHE.

F. Post the box back to the laboratory. You can ask a friend, neighbour or family member to drop the pack off at a postbox or post office.

Contact them by phone and leave the pack outside your door ready for them to collect. This is so you don't risk passing on the infection.

Please follow current advice on isolation.

Visit:

www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

If at any stage your condition worsens, or if you are more worried about your health contact NHS 111 urgently