

**FOI 23/804**

Dear

Thank you for your email correspondence with our FOI team on 21 October 2023, where you submitted an FOI request for the following:

*The PCR test and the Lateral flow test are diagnostic for active COVID-19 disease and for COVID-19 transmission’.*

The MHRA does not hold the information requested. To assist with your question, we provide a summary and useful links below:

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing detects the presence of ribonucleic acid (RNA), the genetic material of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Lateral flow devices (LFDs) detect the presence of an antigen (a type of protein) produced by the SARS-CoV-2 virus when it is active. Both PCR and LFDs are used to detect the active form and non-active form of the disease (asymptomatic individuals), enabling the identification of the population with a transmissible form of the virus.

Please note that the above information is publicly available and can be accessed here:

1. Performance of lateral flow devices during the COVID-19 pandemic - GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lateral-flow-device-performance-data/performance-of-lateral-flow-devices-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>
2. Key points summary: asymptomatic testing for SARS-CoV-2 using antigen-detecting lateral flow devices (evidence from performance data October 2020 to May 2021) - GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lateral-flow-device-performance-data/key-points-summary-asymptomatic-testing-for-sars-cov-2-using-antigen-detecting-lateral-flow-devices-evidence-from-performance-data-october-2020-to-m>

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date you receive this response and addressed to: [MHRA request email]

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you were to remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the internal review, you would have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please bear in mind that the Information Commissioner will not normally review our handling of your request unless you have first contacted us to conduct an internal review. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

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Kind regards,

MHRA Customer Experience Centre  
Communications and engagement team  
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency  
10 South Colonnade, Canary Wharf