

Availability of Rapid COVID-19 Testing for Hospital Visitors in Northern Ireland

Friends and family play an important role in supporting a patient's emotional wellbeing and helping them in their recovery.

Rapid Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing for visitors **who do not have any COVID-19 symptoms** is available as an additional support to the existing range of public health measures which are already in place across hospitals.

We would encourage all visitors to undertake LFD self-testing (twice a week, every 3 to 4 days) prior to visiting, not only to protect themselves but also importantly to help protect their loved ones who are currently in hospital.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 you must not visit the hospital under any circumstances. You should immediately self-isolate and book a PCR test in the usual way.

What is a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Test?

A rapid **LFD test** is a test for people **without symptoms** of COVID-19. It is easy to take and is carried out in the comfort of your own home. It is designed to quickly and reliably tell you if you are infectious with the virus. It gives a quick result (in as little as 30 minutes) and uses a device similar to a pregnancy test.

Benefits for you and your close contacts of taking a regular LFD Test

About 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms but can still infect others. Even if you are fully vaccinated, there is still a chance you can pick up and pass COVID-19 to other people.

Rapid LFD tests for COVID-19 have an important role in detecting cases in people who are infected but are showing no symptoms and may be unwittingly passing the virus on to others.

LFD tests are effective at picking up those who are most infectious. Testing twice a week and on a regular basis with LFDs increases their detection rate.

This means that regular testing helps to protect you, your family and those that you come into contact with. It also helps to make the hospital environment a safer place for everyone, including you.

How do I order LFD Tests?

LFD Tests are currently free and can be ordered online for free delivery to your home <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

You can also order LFD tests for collection in a number of locations across Northern Ireland: [Find where to get rapid lateral flow tests - NHS \(test-and-trace.nhs.uk\)](https://www.test-and-trace.nhs.uk)

[You can also phone 119](https://www.nhs.uk/119) (free from mobiles and landlines) from 7am to 11pm to order LFD tests.

How do I carry out a LFD Test?

To take the LFD test you must rub a long cotton bud (swab) over your tonsils (or where they would have been) and inside your nose. This is then mixed with a solution and applied to the test strip to give a reading.

Further information is provided along with your test and should be followed closely.

Additional guidance on how to use the test can be found by typing the following into your internet browser <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

What should I do after I get the results of the test?

It is important to report the result from your LFD test **in all cases** regardless of your result. This will help our health service to monitor the virus most effectively.

To report your LFD test result, please type the following into your internet browser <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> or you can [phone 119](https://www.nhs.uk/119) (free from mobiles and landlines) from 7am to 11pm to report your LFD test result.

What should I do if my test is positive?

In the event of a positive LFD test **please do not visit the hospital.**

If you test positive with an LFD test, you should immediately self-isolate and arrange to get a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test to confirm the result of your LFD test.

A PCR test is used to diagnose people who are infected with COVID-19. It can be sent to your home or you can book an appointment at a walk-in or drive-through test centre.

To arrange for a PCR test to be sent to your home or to arrange an appointment, please refer to the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

You can also book a PCR test by phoning **119** (free from mobiles and landlines) from 7am to 11pm.