

8 March 2021

Protecting families with Lateral Flow Testing – parents and carers

Dear parent or carer,

Further to the information your school has already provided about your child's return to education, I'd like to make you aware of additional Government advice about protecting your family through regular Covid testing.

We expect that the reopening of schools will see a rise in the infection rate in the general population. To help control the virus, it is recommended that you and everyone in your household aged 11 and over test twice a week, with 3 or 4 days between each test. You should test twice a week even if you work from home. You should test twice a week even if you have been vaccinated.

Testing is free, fast and safe. Tests contain no animal products.

Testing should be used to protect your family alongside other Covid control measures - following all lockdown restrictions, wearing a face covering, following social distancing rules and washing hands often. It's vital you continue to observe these even when testing negative.

Why test?

The virus spreads secretly – some people get symptoms, but as many as 1 in 3 don't. They feel fine but can still pass the deadly virus on to others, even after being vaccinated.

By testing regularly, even though you feel fine, you'll be helping to fight Covid and protect your family. You'll also be helping to make the lifting of further lockdown restrictions more likely.

What happens if we test positive?

You should follow a pattern of regular testing and attending school or work as long as everyone in your household tests negative and continues to feel well. If one member of your household tests positive, you should all self-isolate at home for 10 days. Only by taking this action will we stop Covid spreading through society and get back to a more normal life.

You should also self-isolate if any family member develops symptoms of coronavirus – a fever, continuous cough, or change to their sense of taste or smell. You should self-isolate, even if the person with symptoms recently tested negative.

The family member that's feeling unwell should take a different type of test, one used when people have symptoms. This can be ordered online at www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling 119. Only if this test comes back as negative can your family stop its self-isolation before the full 10 days is up. [Find out more about self-isolating.](#)

If you're on a low income and cannot work while self-isolating, you may be entitled to a payment of £500. See [further information on the council's website.](#)

Who should test and how?

Pre-school and primary aged pupils

Do not need to be regularly tested. Public Health England advise there are limited benefits to testing primary pupils. They may find the testing process unpleasant and difficult. Adults in their household and any children in year 7 and above are advised to test twice weekly – see below.

Secondary school pupils and college students (year 7 and above)

On returning to school, pupils will be asked to take 3 tests at their place of study under the supervision of a trained operator and take a fourth test themselves using a home test kit.

Pupils will then continue taking twice-weekly tests using home test kits. Kits will either be provided by the school or can be collected from a local test site. If neither of these options is possible, kits can be sent out in the post. Pupils must report their result to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is completed, either online or by telephone, as set out in the home test kit instructions.

Up to 14 kits at a time can be collected from some local test centres. The person collecting must be over 18. Three sites in Harrow offer collections - Northholt Road Community Hall car park, Harrow Weald Rec and Kenton Rec. If more convenient, you can collect from a neighbouring borough – there are sites at Northwick Park, in Edgware and Hendon. Find your nearest [on this map](#).

This map also shows busy times and opening hours. Most sites are open for kit collection between 1.30 and 7pm. Please do not come to collect kits outside of the hours shown, as these sites also operate as test centres for people with coronavirus symptoms.

If you are unable to collect home test kits in person, they can be requested by post, but this service should only be used where no alternative is possible. [Order home test kits](#).

If your secondary aged child cannot test in school or you're unsure about using a home testing kit, tests are also available at Harrow Council's community testing sites. Children aged 11 to 15 can test at these sites if they are accompanied by a parent or guardian, who must also provide their consent.

Adults in your household or childcare bubble, not in education

You should test twice a week, with 3 or 4 days between each test. You may be able to test in the workplace. Alternatively, you can test at one of five centres provided by Harrow Council. These are open 7 days a week and offer early morning as well as late night testing. Please note that you cannot collect home test kits from any of these test centres, they only offer testing on site.

Find more information about Harrow's testing service at www.harrow.gov.uk/test. Here you'll also find the information in this letter and links through to the pages referenced.

You can also test in another borough if it offers a more convenient site. [Find your nearest test centre](#).

Adults can also test using home test kits, as above. Again, they should only request kits by post if these other options cannot be used.

This guidance follows the latest Government advice – find out more at GOV.UK

Best wishes and many thanks,

Carole Furlong
Director of Public Health
Harrow Council