



Covid-19 Testing

Information for pregnant women

We would like to offer you a test for COVID-19 (novel coronavirus). A member of staff will perform this test with your consent.

You have a right to decline the test and this will not affect your care. You will be offered the test again if your baby has to be admitted to the special care baby unit. Mothers who test positive for COVID-19 will not be able to visit the special care baby unit to keep all babies safe. Partners will also be advised to isolate for 14 days due to close contact with you.

COVID-19 symptoms (novel coronavirus)

This is a respiratory disease spread mainly by person to person contact.

Symptoms of the virus include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and loss of smell or taste.

Some people have the virus and have no symptoms (asymptomatic) and some people show no symptoms for a while then have symptoms later (pre-symptomatic).

Below are some questions and answers you may find helpful

Why is the test being offered?

The test is being offered to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 in hospitals to staff and other patients. The result will help us make sure the correct precautions are taken to protect you and your baby.

You can decline the test. This will limit our ability to advise you on future care for you and your baby if you are positive but not showing symptoms of COVID-19 (asymptomatic).



We will request that you remain isolated from other patients as we will not have a test result for you.

For more information see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

We expect the numbers of pregnant women who test positive for COVID-19 to be very small.

When will I be offered the test?

You will be offered the test if you are being admitted to the maternity unit or expected to be admitted within the next few days. This includes induction of labour, elective caesarean section, antenatal admission and labour. You will not be tested for attending an outpatient appointment.

What happens in the test? What does it feel like?

A member of staff will take swabs from the back of your throat (this may cause you to gag) and nose. It may be a little uncomfortable but should not be painful.

Will my birth partner be offered the test?

No. At present there are no recommendations to screen birth partners. This may happen in the future. Your partner, if living with you, can accompany you in labour and stay with you after birth.

Will my baby be offered the test?

Yes, if you have suspected or confirmed coronavirus at the time your baby is born, we will offer to test your baby with your consent. Further information

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/coronavirus-and-caring-for-your-baby>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-in-children/>

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/covid-19-guidance-neonatal-settings#testing-and-isolation-of-infants>

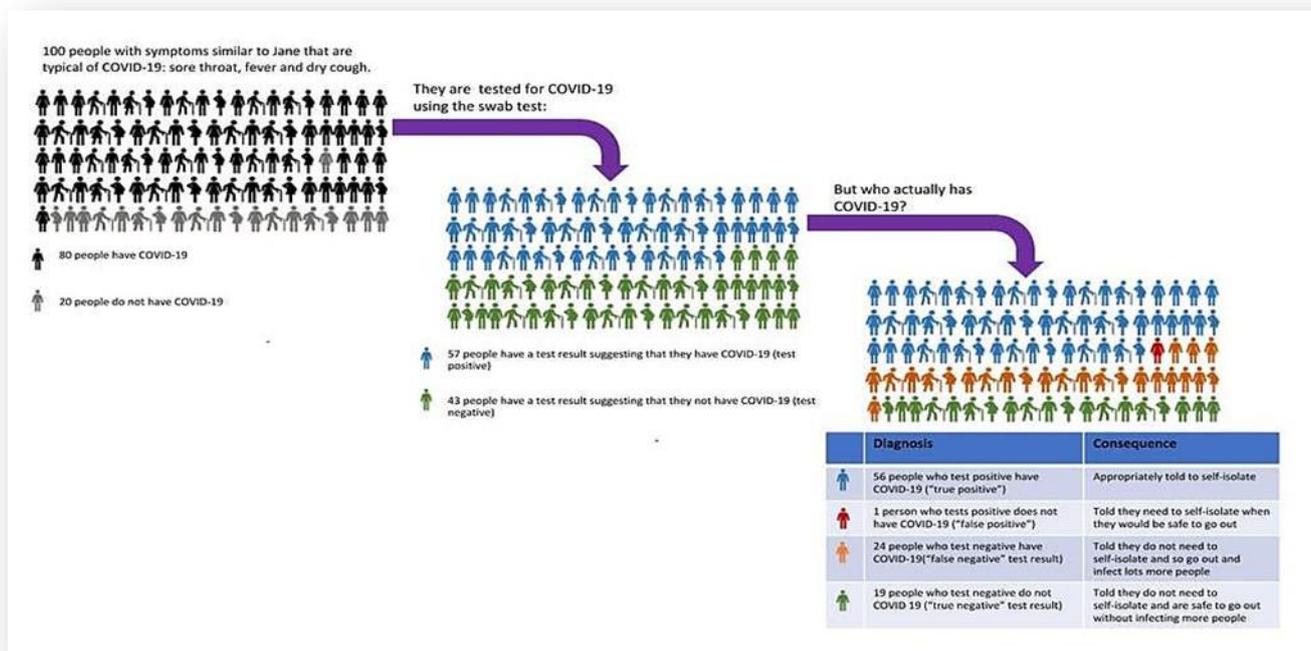
How accurate is the test?

No tests are 100% accurate. Although tests can perform well in ideal laboratory conditions, in real life lots of other factors affect accuracy including the timing of the test, how the swab was taken, and the handling of the specimen. There may be false positive or false negative results.

Evidence from China suggests that an estimated 24 out of 100 people will have a “false negative result”. See diagram below for possible results (NIHR Applied research collaboration West, April 2020).

False positive cases are rare, but may be due to a previous infection. If you have COVID-19 symptoms while waiting for your result, we will care for you as though you are positive for COVID-19 until your results are available.





Saying 'YES' to test

- Once the test is done it will take up to 24hrs before a result is available
- If your test is negative, a member of staff will inform you of your result. If you are at home you will receive a phone call from a member of staff
- If your test is positive, you will be informed of the result by a doctor. We will then take steps to care for you and baby using our planned care pathways for Covid-19 positive women.

Saying 'NO' to test

If you say 'No' to the test we will care for you in the safest way we can. We will wear personal protective equipment and take all precautions. We may not be able to keep you separate from other women, so if you are carrying the virus, you may pass it on to other women, babies and staff.

You can say 'No' to your baby being tested

Babies and children are generally less affected by COVID-19 and have shown mild illness or no symptoms at all. Good hand hygiene and infection control will help to keep your baby safe. You are advised to breast feed. Evidence remains unclear that the virus is passed from mother to baby before birth.



Who can I contact if I have more questions or concerns?

Please speak with a doctor for further information about the test if you are concerned.

<https://patient.info/news-and-features/covid-19-can-i-get-tested-for-coronavirus>

I am planning a caesarean birth

Your COVID-19 test will be offered when you have the pre-assessment appointment for your planned caesarean birth date.

The planning and timing of your caesarean may be altered if you test positive as preparations need to be made to reduce the chance of passing the virus to other women.

Planning an induction of labour

Your COVID-19 test will be offered when you are booked for an induction or when you attend for your induction. The doctor will discuss your options with you.

Choices of place of birth with positive result

A doctor will speak with you to assess symptoms and any additional risk factors you may have. As not all risks about COVID-19 are known, as a precaution we advise women to give birth on the labour ward.

If you do not have symptoms and have no other risks you need to discuss further options with the doctor or midwife.

What if my results come back positive in labour?

If you are in the **birth centre** and **test positive** then we will advise you to transfer to the labour ward for closer monitoring and care.

The use of water is limited to labour and pain relief only. We advise that the baby is born out of the pool at present and will keep this under review as more evidence emerges.

What will happen on the postnatal ward if I test positive?

You and your baby will receive exactly the same care as if you were negative. You will be requested to wear a face mask when moving outside of your room/bay. You will either be in a separate room or with other women who have tested positive.

As with all our new mothers we will aim to have you home as early as possible. The doctor will assess if you need any special care before discharge (for example medication to prevent blood clots).

You will receive baby feeding support whatever your choice.

What should I do when I go home?

It is important to keep hygiene practices (washing hands before and after doing any tasks and before and after touching baby). Try and establish a routine when you get home. Keep in touch with people remotely and practice social distancing rules. Visitors should be kept away and please follow government guidelines on isolation.



What extra support will I be offered?

You and your baby will receive whatever care you need regardless of your test results. Community midwives and health visitors will make contact.

Register of Birth during COVID-19

Please remember to register your baby's birth. You will be sent home with the paperwork you need to register your baby. Do follow your local registry office advice.

Your baby does not need to be registered to receive medical care. You can also claim for child benefit or universal credit if the birth has not been registered as yet.

Who can I contact for help and support?

For further information the following numbers may be helpful

Community Midwives: Mon to Fri from 08.30hrs to 17.00hrs - 020 7288 3482

Maternity Covid queries: Mon to Fri from 08.30hrs to 17.00hrs – 07831 122 271

Maternity Assessment Unit (MAU) after 5pm: 020 7288 5880

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Whittington Health NHS Trust

Magdala Avenue

London

N19 5NF

Phone: 020 7272 3070

www.whittington.nhs.uk

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