

4 June 2020

Coronavirus testing in Hertfordshire and new ‘Test and Trace’ explained

The new national NHS ‘Test and Trace’ programme has been launched and is now in operation in our county.

This means that if you have a test which shows that you have coronavirus, you will be contacted by someone from the NHS Test and Trace team. You will be told that you must self-isolate for 14 days and will be asked to supply the details of anyone you have been in close contact with, from the two days before your symptoms started. Those people will then also be contacted by the NHS Test and Trace team and told that they need to self-isolate for 14 days.

If you receive a positive test result, or if you have been in close contact with someone who tests positive, it is very important for your own health and the health of those around you that you self-isolate. This applies even if you feel well and don’t have any symptoms. You could still be a carrier of the virus and the people you meet could get the virus from you and be seriously affected.

Stopping COVID-19 from spreading is crucial to prevent more lives from being lost.

Genuine contract tracers will:

- call you from 0300 013 5000
- send you text messages from ‘NHS’
- ask you to sign into the [NHS test and trace contact-tracing website](#)
- ask for your full name and date of birth to confirm your identity, and postcode to offer support while self-isolating
- ask about the coronavirus symptoms you have been experiencing
- ask you to provide the name, telephone number and/or email address of anyone you have had close contact with from the two days before your symptoms started
- ask if anyone you have been in contact with is under 18 or lives outside of England.

Search online for ‘NHS Test and Trace – [how it works](#)’ for more information. You will never be asked to disclose bank details or ring an expensive phone number beginning with 09 or 087 by a genuine Test and Trace team member.

Improved access to test booking

Anyone in Hertfordshire with suspected coronavirus symptoms can book either a mail-order or drive-through test if they need one. For those who can’t go online to www.gov.uk/coronavirus to book a test, or for anyone who needs additional help, a new telephone call centre is available –ring 119 between 7am and 11pm or 18001 0300 303 2713 if you have hearing or speech difficulties.

The coronavirus call centre can help you to book a test, answer your enquiries about the testing process and what to do once you have your result, or chase up any delayed results.

Hertfordshire's mobile test sites are all open between 10am and 4pm and are as follows:

- on Thursdays in Watford at the Central Watford leisure centre, WD17 3HA
- on Saturdays in Hertford at County Hall, Pegs Lane, SG13 8DQ
- on Sundays in Watford at the Central Watford leisure centre, WD17 3HA
- on Mondays in Stevenage, off Six Hills Way, SG1 2DF. Please follow the signs to the test centre, to ensure that you do not join a queue for the Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Please bring a phone to the test centre if you have one.

New antibody tests becoming available in Hertfordshire

A new COVID-19 antibody blood test, which shows whether someone has been exposed to the virus in the past, is beginning to be rolled out to NHS staff in Hertfordshire. The test is starting to become available to those who want to take part and is carried out by a healthcare professional, taking a sample of blood.

Although the test can tell somebody that they have had the virus in the past, this doesn't necessarily mean that they are immune to getting it in future. Everyone must continue to follow social distancing and hygiene measures and must isolate if they are a close contact of someone who tests positive for coronavirus.

The test is designed to help the government and scientists to gain a better understanding of how the virus spreads and how different areas have been affected.

Notes to Editors

1. Tests to find out whether someone currently has coronavirus are effective if people are swabbed in the first three days of having suspected symptoms. The nose and throat swab test cannot detect whether somebody has had coronavirus in the past. Symptoms of coronavirus are: a new continuous cough, a high temperature, or a loss of, or change in a person's normal sense of taste or smell.
2. To book a test, go online to <http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> and enter your details. You will be sent a booking code. The booking system will only show you details of test locations which are available in the following 24 hours.

3. When all the available tests slots have been booked at a particular test site, that location will not appear on the national list. Additional capacity is added regularly, so check-in on the website throughout the day if you are not successful at booking a local drive-through or mail-order test the first time you try.
4. Hertfordshire's local resilience forum (LRF) is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency, as well as other partners in the military and voluntary sector who provide a valuable contribution to LRF work in emergency preparedness. The LRF plans and prepares for, and coordinates the response to, localised incidents and national emergencies. It works to identify potential risks and produces emergency plans to either prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident on local communities.