

Patient information

Covid-19 testing before your treatment

In the run up to your treatment, we need to make sure as far as possible that you are free from Covid-19 infection. This is to both help ensure you are fit and healthy for your recovery, and to protect other patients.

The arrangements for testing depend on the type of treatment you are receiving. These are set out below. It's really important you follow the instructions carefully – without the right tests we might need to postpone your treatment.

Most day surgery procedures

If you have been:

- fully vaccinated against Covid-19 (that means you have had both first and second doses of the vaccine at least 14 days ago), and
- have not tested positive for Covid-19 within the last 90 days, and
- have not been a recent contact of a suspected or confirmed Covid-19 case.

then you can carry out a test at home for Covid-19. We call this our lateral flow pathway.

You can get a free rapid self-testing kit – known as lateral flow tests – from a local community pharmacy or by ordering them online at <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests> for home delivery. You can also call 119 to order kits.

You should perform the test **the day before your planned admission**, either around 3pm for a morning admission or just before bed for an afternoon admission.

Please read the test kit instructions carefully; the test should take no more than 40 minutes to complete, including waiting for the result. You should report the result online at <https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result> or by calling 119.

- **If you test likely positive:** please call the phone number on your appointment letter as soon as possible.
- **If you test likely negative:** please be ready to show confirmation of your result to staff when you arrive for your treatment. This might be a text or email from the NHS reporting service, a photo of the test device on your phone. You do not normally need to bring the test device with you, unless you have no other way of showing the result.

Day cases procedures where you do not meet the criteria above Most Inpatient Theatre procedures

For these procedures, we use a different type of test known as a PCR test. In most cases you can still carry out the test at home, but we will process it in our laboratories to get the result. We call this our elective home testing pathway.

You will be sent a test kit by post around a week before your admission date. You should carefully read the instructions, and take the test **three days before your admission date**. You will be required to isolate following your swab. Follow the instructions supplied with the kit to return it to the laboratory for analysis. We will contact you if you test positive, if you do not hear from us please attend your admission as planned.

- **If you test positive:** your procedure will be postponed. We are required by law to report all Covid test results, so you may also be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to help reduce the spread of the virus.
- **If you test negative:** your procedure will go ahead and you can attend as normal.

If you are unable to carry out a swab test at home

For most patients carrying out a test at home is the most convenient approach, but we know this may not be suitable for everyone. If you are unable to carry out a test at home with support you will instead have to come to West Suffolk Hospital for an in-person swab test. We call this our rapid PCR pathway.

Please let us know if this applies to you. We may also ask you to follow this route if we do not receive your lateral flow or PCR test results in time.

We will book you in for a test appointment at the hospital **the day before your admission**. You will need to isolate following your swab. We will analyse the test and contact you to let you know if you test positive.

- **If you test positive:** your procedure will be postponed. We are required by law to report all Covid test results, so you may also be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to help reduce the spread of the virus.
- **If you test negative:** your procedure will go ahead and you can attend as normal.