

# Test results

## COVID-19 testing

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Your test sample will go to one of our labs for testing.

You will get your test results by text message. If your test is positive, you will get a follow-up phone call.

## When you'll get your results

Most people will get their test results back within 3 days, but it can take longer.

Patients who are most ill and in hospital are being prioritised. They will get their results within 12 to 24 hours.

If you have symptoms:

continue to [self-isolate](#) while you wait for your results

follow any advice your GP gives you

If you are a close contact with no symptoms, you should continue to [restrict your movements](#) for 14 days.

## If you have not received your test results

Contact us if you are waiting more than 3 days for your COVID-19 test result.

You can phone HSELive 1850 24 1850 (lo call) - Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am to 5pm.

Do not contact your GP for test results. Their phone lines need to be kept open for people who need help with symptoms.

[Join the Fight Against Coronavirus.](#)  
**[Download the CovidTracker app](#)**



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## If you were tested because you had symptoms

If you have not received your test results you can stop self-isolating if both these apply:

you have had no fever for 5 days

it has been 10 days since you first developed symptoms

## If you were tested because you were a close contact

If you have no symptoms, you can stop restricting your movements 14 days after your last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

## What your results mean

Your test results will be either:

Positive (COVID-19 virus found)

Negative (COVID-19 virus was not found)

Indeterminate result

Invalid or inhibitory result

[Read advice for children under the age of 13 who have been tested](#)

## Positive

This means you have COVID-19 (coronavirus).

You will get a text message with your results. A member of the contact tracing team will phone you and answer any questions you have.

## If you have symptoms and test positive

If you were tested because you have symptoms, continue to [self-isolate](#) until both of these apply:

it has been at least 10 days since you first developed symptoms

you have not had a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or higher) for 5 days in a row

You will get a call from our [contact tracing](#) team. They will ask you about the people and places you visited 48 hours before your symptoms started and until you started [self-isolating](#). This is so they can let those your close contacts know that they will need to [restrict their movements](#).

They will also ask you if you have been using [the COVID Tracker app](#).

## **If you have no symptoms, are a close contact and test positive**

If you have no symptoms but were tested because you were a close contact, you need to self-isolate until it has been 10 days since you had your test. Self-isolation is different to restricting your movements.

## **If your child tests positive**

A positive result can be worrying for you and your child. But it is unlikely your child will get very ill. COVID-19 is usually not as serious in children and babies as it can be in adults.

Read about what to do if your child has to isolate from other people

## **What people you live with need to do**

Everyone you live with will become a close contact. They will need to restrict their movements for 14 days and get tested.

If your child tests positive, everyone will need to restrict their movements for a little bit longer. They will need to restrict their movements for 17 days. This is because it is harder for children to isolate and completely keep away from other people while they have the virus. Everyone will also need to be tested.

## **Negative**

You'll get a text message to say that the test did not detect COVID-19 virus. This means that the virus was not been found in your sample.

A negative result does not mean that you never had COVID-19.

It's possible that you had the virus, but that:

- your immune system cleared it by the time you were tested

- there was no virus present in the sample taken

## **If you have symptoms and test negative**

If you were tested because you have symptoms of COVID-19, continue to self-isolate until you have not had any symptoms for 48 hours. This is because you may have another infectious illness, such as flu.

You can return to your normal activities once you are 48 hours without symptoms. This includes going to work or school.

If your symptoms continue or get worse, phone your GP.

## **If you have no symptoms, are a close contact and test negative**

If you have no symptoms and were tested because you are a close contact, continue to restrict your movements for 14 days.

Close contacts who get a negative result sometimes need to have a second test. This is because it can take up to 14 days for the virus to show up in your system after you have been exposed to it. Even though your test result is negative, you could still have the virus.

A contact tracer will ask you for the date that you last had contact with a positive case. You may be invited for a second test 7 days after this date. Your contact tracer will tell you if you need a second test.

[Read more about second tests for close contacts](#)

## **What the people you live with need to do**

Everyone you live with will no longer need to restrict their movements.

## **Indeterminate, invalid or inhibitory result**

Sometimes your sample may not give a clear result. This is called an indeterminate result. An indeterminate result means that the lab cannot tell for sure if you have COVID-19 or not.

Sometimes the lab will be unable to get any result when it tests your sample. This is called an invalid or inhibitory result.

Indeterminate, invalid or inhibitory results are not common.

## **If you have symptoms and get an indeterminate, invalid or inhibitory result**

If you have symptoms and get an indeterminate, invalid or inhibitory result you will be treated as if you have the virus. This is to keep you and others safe.

Phone your GP and ask them if you need to be tested again. They will decide based on how long it has been since your first symptoms and what your current symptoms are.

Continue to self-isolate until both of these apply:

it has been 10 days since you first developed symptoms

you have not had a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or higher) for 5 days in a row

## **If you have no symptoms, are a close contact and get an indeterminate, invalid or inhibitory result**

If you were tested because you were a close contact, continue to restrict your movements for 14 days.

Phone your GP and ask them if you need to be tested again. Tell them that you were tested because you are a close contact but the result came back as indeterminate, invalid or inhibitory. They will decide based on how long it has been since your last contact with the confirmed case and if you have developed any symptoms.

## If you live with someone waiting for test results

If you are living with someone who is self-isolating and waiting on test results, you should [restrict your movements](#).

If their test comes back positive (COVID-19 virus found), you will become a close contact and should [follow advice for close contacts](#).

If their test comes back negative, you can return to your normal activities.

## Living with a close contact

If you live with someone who was tested because they are a close contact, you do not need to restrict your movements.

[Follow the advice on living with someone who is a close contact](#)

## No long-term evidence of immunity

Some studies have shown that antibodies develop soon after infection. These have been detected for at least 2 months after infection. But because it is a new virus, there is no long-term evidence that having COVID-19 means you are immune to getting it again.

You may still be:

at risk of getting re-infected

able to pass the infection to others

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Did you find what you were looking for?

Yes

No

## Got a COVID-19 question?

We're here to help.

Call [1850 24 1850](tel:1850241850) or [01 240 8787](tel:012408787) Tweet: [@HSELive](https://twitter.com/HSELive)

[Contact details for the Deaf Community](#).

Monday to Friday: 8am - 8pm

Saturday and Sunday: 9am - 5pm

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