



NHS Test and Trace

Frequently Asked Questions – pharmacy, optometry and dental settings

What is NHS Test and Trace?

The NHS Test and Trace service aims to trace the spread of the virus and isolate new infections. Anyone who develops symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate (along with other members of their household) and follow the 'Stay at home' guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

The individual who has symptoms is asked to order a test to find out if they have COVID-19. Their household contacts need to self-isolate but do not need to be tested unless they too become symptomatic. If the symptomatic individual tests positive, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace and asked to share information promptly about their recent contacts so that other people who may need to self-isolate can be alerted. If a healthcare worker is confirmed to be a positive case, it is important that they declare that they are a healthcare worker when contacted by NHS Test and Trace. ***Anybody who is contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service due to being a contact of somebody with COVID-19, must self-isolate if advised to do so.***

How do I order a test for COVID-19?

Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 should self-isolate and order a test. Testing is most sensitive within 3 days of symptoms developing. Tests can be requested by calling 119 or via this website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

How is a 'contact' defined?

The section in this guidance (see web link below), entitled 'What do we mean by a contact?' clearly lays out who will be deemed to be a contact of a case. Being within a metre of a positive case for a minute or longer would make them a contact or being within 2 metres for 15 minutes or longer. A simple example would be staff sitting together to have lunch or staff giving each other a lift to work.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

Does this all apply for healthcare workers just as it does for members of the public?

This guidance provides advice on the management of staff and patients in health and social care settings:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings/covid-19-management-of-exposed-healthcare-workers-and-patients-in-hospital-settings#resident-exposures-in-care-settings>

If the appropriate PPE has been worn properly whilst in contact with a patient who then turns out to be COVID-19 positive, the staff who came into contact with the positive case whilst wearing appropriate PPE would **not** be deemed to be contacts who needed to self-isolate for 14 days. If there is any question about a breach of PPE or the level of PPE used, then the exposure would need to be risk assessed.

If a staff member tests positive for COVID-19, other staff members will have to self-isolate for 14 days if they are deemed to be 'contacts'. This could obviously have a big impact on a dental practice if a number of staff are deemed to be 'contacts' of the case. **It is therefore really important that the staff ensure they are socially distant from each other at all times when not wearing PPE** so that they are not deemed to be contacts.

Can I download and use the NHS COVID-19 app if I am a healthcare worker?

Yes but please ensure you pause contact tracing at work. The free NHS COVID-19 app is a vital part of the NHS Test and Trace service in England. However, you should be aware that clinicians are advised to pause contact tracing on the app, when practising infection prevention and control, and wearing correct PPE. <https://faq.covid19.nhs.uk/article/KA-01100/en-us>

Remember to turn contact tracing back on, once you leave work.

I have had an antibody test and received a positive result. Do I still need to self-isolate if I am identified as a contact of a positive case?

Yes. Healthcare workers who have undergone COVID-19 antibody testing and received a positive result must still comply with any instructions to self-isolate as it is not yet known whether a positive antibody test demonstrates immunity.

What should I do if a member of staff develops symptoms of COVID-19?

If the staff member is at work he/she should be advised to put on a surgical face mask immediately and return home and self-isolate. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>

The staff member should be advised to seek a COVID-19 test ASAP. Tests can be requested by calling 119 or via this website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

The pharmacy/practice manager or other appropriate person must notify Public Health England (PHE) of any positive cases they become aware of in staff or patients/members of the public who have visited their healthcare setting.

If staff absence is likely to impact on service delivery, the pharmacy/practice manager or other appropriate person must notify NHS EI by completion of the Notification of COVID-19 service disruption and/or outbreak in Primary Care form via the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=kp4VA8Zyl0umSq9Q55CtvxHcP71skKxDgA-0H2yj0aVURDBDMzE0NE5aRFhSQ0MwSFhaQ0RQSDhaMS4u>

There is no requirement to inform NHS EI of a single positive case if there will be no impact on service provision.

How are the contacts of a case in a healthcare setting identified?

When an individual tests positive for COVID-19, they are asked to provide details of their recent contacts to NHS Test and Trace. If they report that they have been in a healthcare setting, eg a pharmacy or optometry/dental practice, either as a patient or a member of staff, the local PHE health protection team (HPT) will contact the healthcare setting to gather further information. *Please note that if the healthcare setting is made aware of a positive case in a member of staff/patient, they should proactively notify PHE.*

The HPT will ask the pharmacy/practice owner (or appropriate person) to identify any contact in the workplace setting between the positive case and other individuals from 48 hours before onset of symptoms (or 48 hours prior to the test if they are asymptomatic). This includes contact with other members of staff and contact with members of the public/patients. An assessment will be made of the infection prevention and control measures in place including appropriate use of PPE and social distancing measures for patients and staff to include any contact staff members might have with each other outside the immediate work setting eg lift sharing etc. An assessment of the length of contact will also need to be made. If PPE has been worn during the periods of contact, any possible breaches in PPE will need to be risk assessed to determine whether those individuals need to be classed as 'contacts'.

The pharmacy/practice manager or other appropriate person will then be asked to get in touch with all identified contacts (staff and members of public/patients) and advise them accordingly about the need to self-isolate, as per the guidance for non-household contacts:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-contacts-of-people-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection-who-do-not-live-with-the-person>

The pharmacy/practice will be asked to report back to the HPT about the number of contacts identified and whether they have any symptoms.

PLEASE NOTE: The PHE HPTs are extremely busy at present and there may be a delay in them responding to the pharmacy/practice. To avoid any potential further spread of infection whilst awaiting contact from the HPT, the pharmacy/practice should identify contacts of the positive case, consider whether there has been appropriate use of PPE and advise the contacts accordingly of the need to self-isolate.

How do I contact Public Health England if I need to notify them that a member of staff has tested positive for COVID-19?

PHE West Midlands

Telephone: 0344 225 3560 – Option 0 then Option 2

Out of hours (via West Midlands Ambulance Service First Response): 01384 679031

Email*: wm.2019cov@phe.gov.uk

**All urgent enquiries should be telephoned.*

PHE East Midlands

Telephone: 0344 2254 524, press the option the Health Protection Team

Email*: ICC.EastMidlands@phe.gov.uk

**All urgent enquiries should be telephoned.*