

1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
 2. Health and social care (<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care>)
 3. Public health (<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health>)
 4. Health protection (<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/health-protection>)
 5. Infectious diseases (<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/health-protection-infectious-diseases>)
 6. Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing: privacy information
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-privacy-information>)
- Department of Health & Social Care (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care>)

Guidance

Antibody testing for coronavirus: privacy information

Updated 16 April 2021

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-privacy-information/antibody-testing-for-coronavirus-privacy-information>

Introduction

The UK government is rolling out a coronavirus testing programme, which is made up of the following elements:

- testing frontline workers and seriously ill patients
- testing to see if you currently have coronavirus
- testing to see if you have coronavirus antibodies
- monitoring the spread and development of coronavirus

This notice focuses on home antibody testing for coronavirus.

Check if you're eligible for an antibody test (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests>).

This test is carried out by **ELISA** Testing. Your blood test is analysed in a laboratory.

More details on the test can be found in annex 1.

The test is completely voluntary. You can choose not to complete the test at any point, but are encouraged to take it if you have been invited to order a test kit. If you do take the test, please carefully follow the instructions provided.

Please note that this testing is not offered on a first-come first-served basis. There are a limited number of tests available and people will be prioritised based on helping to understand the spread of the virus.

An antibody test can tell you if it's likely you've had coronavirus before. But it does not work for everyone, as some people who've had the virus do not have antibodies. An antibody test does not tell you:

- if you're immune to coronavirus
- if you can or cannot spread the virus to other people

The test kit comes with instructions on how to use it. Once you have taken the test, your sample will be analysed in a laboratory and you will be informed of the result (positive, negative or failed). If you get a positive antibody test result (indicating you have coronavirus antibodies), you will still need to follow the same social distancing advice as everyone else.

You will be given advice on any next steps that you should take following your result.

The purpose of the testing and associated data collection is:

1) Operational:

- to be able to deliver the testing service
- to monitor and improve the delivery of the testing service

2) Personal health information:

- to inform the individual of their antibody status
- to add the antibody test result to the GP record

3) Pandemic response:

- to inform policy in response to the pandemic
- to inform the operational response to the pandemic (for example, local outbreaks)
- to share the data for research

Data controller

The overall testing programme has been commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), and they decide what information is required and how it needs to be used.

DHSC has commissioned the COVID-19 testing programme on behalf of the UK and will be data controller for the purposes of Data Protection legislation. Once the test results have been collated DHSC will remain the controller for the data of English residents. The governments of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland may have also requested (under section 255 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012) that NHS Digital collate relevant test results data for their residents, to be sent to a named organisation in their country to help their response to coronavirus (Public Health Wales, NHS National Services Scotland and Public Health Agency Northern Ireland), who will be the controllers of their respective data.

Other organisations will also carry out parts of the COVID-19 testing programme on behalf of DHSC, but can only act on instructions provided to them by DHSC. These organisations are known as data processors.

Each organisation will require a different level of information about you, but all will use the minimum necessary to do what they are required to by the controller.

What personal data we collect

You need to submit your details on the GOV.UK website to register to be tested for coronavirus antibodies and to receive a home testing kit.

The details we may need from you include:

- identity (name, date of birth, sex)
- other personal details (postcode, ethnicity)

This data is necessary in order to link the test result to the subject's GP record, and also to enable meaningful research and analysis

- contact details (mobile phone number, email address)

This data is necessary to send out test kits and provide results.

- whether you have a weakened immune system
- whether you, or anyone you live with, has tested positive for coronavirus before

This data is necessary to support research and analysis into which groups are vulnerable, and how the virus has spread.

- occupation details

This data is necessary as the eligibility for the test will focus on different groups at different times. Certain sectors appear to be at a higher risk (for example, meat processing), and any vulnerability/immunity could have consequences in outbreak management (for example, schools).

How we use your information in the testing programme

For ELISA testing, after following the instructions provided, you will need to post your testing kit to a laboratory for analysis.

The laboratory will analyse the sample and provide your test result to National Pathology Exchange (NPEX). The lab does not receive any information that would allow them to personally identify you. They only get a Specimen ID from the test kit, and then they attach the result to that Specimen ID.

NPEX will link your registration record with your test result and pass this information onto NHS Business Services Authority, who will inform you of your result by text and/or email. NPEX will also send results to NHS Digital (see annex 2), so they can collate data and information.

Purposes your data will be used for

A positive antibody test will not confer any privileges, certifications or exemptions from existing HM Government or Devolved Administration COVID-19 guidelines. You must still self-isolate in line with guidelines if you come into contact with somebody who has COVID-19.

DHSC are the data controller for the following purposes:

- confirming your request for a test
- receiving and processing your test request (to send you your test kit)
- confirming your results to you
- undertaking quality assurance of the testing process (for example, clinical process assurance)
- analysis to support operational decisions to improve the full end-to-end testing process, such as:
 - day-to-day operational use (for example, whether someone returned their test kit)
 - to inform test process improvements (for example, manage kit delivery times)
 - support logistics planning
- for residents in England, sharing your results with NHS Digital to analyse data in relation to coronavirus.
- sharing results with Public Health England (if you live in England) to help plan and respond to coronavirus
- to invite you to engage with other services/programmes (for example, vaccination programmes, research trials)
- DHSC's own research and analysis in order to inform public policy and response
- to add the antibody test result to your GP record

Data processors and other recipients of your data

Organisations who use your data and information on behalf of a controller can only do so with clear instructions from the controller, and cannot use your data and information for any other purpose. Any use of information that is not covered by the instructions from the controller would be unlawful, unless the

controller agrees and provides written permission to do this.

DHSC have appointed data processors to carry out the following activities:

- registration, and capture of information at the point of ordering a home test
- verify your identity. We may use an agency, who will check your identity (this is not a credit check and does not affect your credit score)
- overseeing the logistics of test kit deliveries
- transporting and delivering kits
- link your personal details (provided on registering for the test) to the test result
- forward your test results, email address and phone number to NHS Business Services Authority (NHS BSA) to send you your test results.
- receive data to enable your results to be communicated back to you by SMS (text) and email, along with supporting information

Services on behalf of DHSC may be provided by different organisations in different regions and a full list of data processors can be found in annex 2.

We may need to share your personal data if we are required to do so by law.

Data retention

Your information will be stored in line with the Records Management Code of Practice for Health and Social Care 2016. This means we will keep your information for up to 8 years before we dispose of it.

Data storage

Information that identifies you will be stored securely, and processed in, the UK and Ireland. Information that does not, and cannot, identify you may be stored and processed outside of this area (for example, information purely about the number of tests conducted, or the number of outcomes from tests).

Legal basis under GDPR and DPA 2018

DHSC's legal basis for processing your personal data is:

- GDPR Article 6 (1) (e) – the processing is necessary for the performance of its official tasks carried out in the public interest in providing and managing a health service
- GDPR Article 9 (2) (h) – the processing is necessary for the management of health/social care systems or services
 - DPA 2018 – Schedule 1, Part 1, (2) (2) (f)
- GDPR Article 9 (2) (i) – the processing is necessary for reasons of public interest in the area of public health
 - DPA 2018 – Schedule 1, Part 1, (3) – Health or social care purposes

Your rights as a data subject

By law, you have a number of rights as a data subject and this testing programme does not take away or reduce these rights.

These rights are:

1. Your right to get copies of your information – you have the right to ask for a copy of any information about you that is used.
2. Your right to get your information corrected – you have the right to ask for any information held about you that you think is inaccurate, to be corrected
3. Your right to limit how your information is used – you have the right to ask for any of the information held about you to be restricted, for example, if you think inaccurate information is being used.
4. Your right to object to your information being used – You can ask for any information held about you to not be used. However, this is not an absolute right, and we may need to continue using your information, and we will tell you if this is the case.
5. Your right to get information deleted – This is not an absolute right, and we may need to continue to use your information, and we will tell you if this is the case.

If you make a request, we have one month to respond to you. If you would like to exercise any of these rights, please contact the Data Protection Officer for the Department of Health and Social Care.

If you are unhappy or wish to complain about how your personal data is used as part of this programme, you should contact DHSC in the first instance to resolve your issue. DHSC may have to work with partner organisations to resolve your complaint.

If you are still not satisfied, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (<http://www.ico.org.uk>).

Data protection officer

DHSC's Data Protection Officer is Lee Cramp. He can be contacted by:

Sending an email to data_protection@dhsc.gov.uk

Or writing to us at:

Data Protection Officer
Department of Health and Social Care
1st Floor North
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Patients living in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland

If you live in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, further information about how your government will use your information (which is specific to each country) can be found here:

- Wales (<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?orgid=950>)
- Scotland (<https://www.informationgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/testing-for-covid19-privacy-information/>)

- Northern Ireland (<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-and-tracing-covid-19/privacy-information>)

Annex 1: types of antibody tests

There is currently one type of antibody test available to see if you have had coronavirus. This is the **ELISA** Test.

This test requires a sample of blood. More details can be found below.

ELISA Test

This test can be conducted at home (or other non-hospital environment) and requires you to take your own sample of blood. The home test kit contains all you need to take your test at home, as well as instructions on how to take the test.

This sample is then sent to a pathology laboratory for analysis. Once the results are known, you will be informed of the result.

Annex 2: list of data processors

Each organisation that processes your information must provide you with information about how they do this, and this information will be limited to their role in the test programme. This should be publicly available on their website or can be requested from them. For example, if you want to know more about how NHS Digital uses your information, then you can visit their website.

Data processors can only act upon written instruction from a data controller, they cannot use data and information without permission of the data controller.

Name	Services they provide
Amazon Web Services (AWS)	Provide digital solution for ordering home test kits
AstraZeneca (Laboratory)	Analyse sample from the completed test kit and share results with NPEX
Barcode Warehouse	Provide barcodes for test kits
Courier 1 (DHL)	Collect completed test kits from homes and deliver them to labs
Courier 2 (Royal Mail Group)	Collect completed test kits from homes and deliver them to labs

Name	Services they provide
Courier 3 (Kuenhe + Nagel)	Collect completed test kits from homes and deliver them to labs
Deloitte	<p>Send invitation text to groups of the general public as directed by DHSC</p> <p>Host and maintain the AWS platform that the Test Tracking System sits on</p> <p>Manage the registration for prioritisation of test kit allocation and is responsible for holding this data and making it available to the NHS</p>
EMIS	Receive test result data and add this to the GP record
Experience Lab	Provide user/market research for people who have undertaken tests
Kainos	Build the digital solution
Laboratory 1 (Milton Keynes)	Analyse sample from the completed test kit and share results with NPEX
Laboratory 2 (Alderley Edge)	Analyse sample from the completed test kit and share results with NPEX
Laboratory 3 (Glasgow)	Analyse sample from the completed test kit and share results with NPEX
Laboratory 4 (Cambridge – run by Astra Zeneca)	Analyse sample from the completed test kit and share results with NPEX

Name	Services they provide
National Pathology Exchange (NPEX) – hosted by Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust	<p>Receive results from labs and link results to test registration details</p> <p>Flow results data to NHS Business Services Authority</p> <p>Flow results data to NHS Digital</p> <p>Flow results to your GP record via the EMIS Keystone product</p>
NHS Business Services Authority (NHS BSA)	Receive test results and notify individuals of their results.
NHS Digital	<p>Collect results data on behalf of the four home countries</p> <p>Match patients to results if this cannot be achieved at NPEX</p> <p>Provide information for organisations in response to COVID-19</p> <p>Provide results data to the Devolved Administrations</p>
Teleperformance	Provide call centre assistance
Thriva	Supply home test kits and collate results from labs (handling the systems integration for this).
TransUnion	Provides identity verification checks as part of the registration process for a home test kit (this is not a credit check and will not affect your credit score)

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