

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – ANTIBODY TESTING FOR COVID-19

Introduction

Antibody testing is a key part of the Government’s testing programme and will play an increasingly important role as we move into the next phase of responding to this epidemic as it will support research in understanding how the immune system responds to the COVID-19 virus. It is important to remember at this stage the science of immunity remains uncertain, though progress is being made every day. There is no strong evidence yet to suggest that those who have been proven to have had the virus are immune. The value of antibody tests therefore is currently limited to answering the question of whether someone has had the virus or not. If you receive a positive antibody result it does not mean that you are immune, or that you cannot pass on the virus to others. You must continue to comply with social distancing measures and government guidelines including PPE.

Confidence in antibody tests needs to be established before being rolled out as part of a national programme of testing. According to Patrick Vallance, Chief Scientific Adviser: “The accuracy of tests is so important that if it means a delay to get there, that delay is worth having.” This is an emerging area of science and therefore what we are doing locally will support this science rather than provide an ‘immunity passport’.

There is no urgent reason at this stage for anyone to be tested for antibodies. A positive antibody test does not mean you can stop following social distancing measures and good infection control measures.

In the first instance, we will be testing NHS staff who have been working in areas with high patient contact with COVID-19. We are working with our Regional Laboratory Network to broaden and scale up our antibody testing model to fit both regional and local priorities. As our laboratory capacity increases, our plan is to expand testing to all NHS staff groups, including primary care and other essential public services from mid-June. Increased volumes of these tests will be made available in the coming weeks.

Staff with active symptoms of COVID-19 will not be offered the antibody tests. They will have to wait 21 days after symptoms presented to test for antibodies or 14 days after confirmation of a positive COVID-19 swab test.

As part of our response to COVID-19, we have set up a **Surrey Heartlands COVID-19 booking portal website** to coordinate a systematic approach to testing across Surrey. Our purpose is to:

1. **Coordinate the COVID-19 testing effort to cover all NHS staff and wider system partner sectors, including some citizen cohorts** who may require PCR swabbing and/or antibody testing.
2. Ensure **our approach is centrally coordinated** and therefore is easy to understand, scale and improve (both from a system partner and individual perspective).
3. Provide **clarity and consistency on our objectives and messaging**.

FAQs Considerations

- The “FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - ANTIBODY TESTING FOR COVID-19” is a supporting document for the activities around the booking portal website. This document will outline FAQs from the following groups only:
 - **NHS staff who are registering for COVID-19 antibody testing**
 - **Other nominated Surrey Heartlands system partners wishing to access antibody testing**
- This is a ‘live’ document and will be updated regularly:
 - The central team will consolidate and issue out the FAQs and answers on a weekly basis.
 - Any critical questions and answers will be shared via email.

Please contact syheartlandscg.testing@nhs.net for:

- feedback, questions or suggested improvements to the FAQs
- all user queries

FAQs

ID	Theme	Question	Answer
KW1	Testing Process	What is this test for?	<p>It is an antibody test, to test whether you <u>have been exposed</u> to COVID-19. The Antibody testing programme will provide information on the prevalence of COVID-19 in the different regions of the country and help better understand how the disease spreads. Public Health England are conducting a study to establish whether antibodies detected by this test indicate immunity to COVID-19.</p> <p><u>It is not an antigen test to identify if you currently have COVID-19.</u></p> <p>The science of immunity remains uncertain, although progress is being made every day. There is no strong evidence yet to suggest that those who have been proven to have had the virus are immune. The value of antibody tests, therefore, is currently limited to answering the question of whether someone has had the virus or not.</p> <p>If you receive a positive antibody result it does not mean that you are immune, or that you cannot pass on the virus to others. You must continue to comply with social distancing measures and government guidelines.</p>
KW2	Testing process	How do I know if I am able to have an antibody test done?	<p>In line with national guidance, Surrey Heartlands has been successfully rolling out testing through a phased approach to NHS staff and other sectors of health and social care.</p> <p>If your employing organisation is currently offering testing to their staff, you will be informed of this through internal communications.</p> <p>If you have not been offered opportunity to access testing through your employing organisation's internal communications, then antibody testing is not currently available to you, and you will be informed through internal communications once it becomes available.</p>

KW3	Testing Roll-out	Are there plans to roll-out this programme wider?	<p>We are currently in discussion with system partners about how logistically we can make antibody testing more widely available. We are working hard to make this available as soon as possible and will be circulating communication to all health and care organisations in due course.</p> <p>The NHS will continue to offer testing to symptomatic staff and their household/family members with the PCR swab test. However, someone with active symptoms of COVID-19 would not be offered the antibody test, and we would wait 21 days after symptoms to test for antibodies.</p>
KW4	Registration	I can't access the booking portal website, what can I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is possible that your organisation's own firewall is blocking access to the booking portal website. This can be tested by using a mobile phone to access the booking portal website, but please make sure that you have turned off the wi-fi (which would also block access through organisation's own firewall) and are using 4G network to access the site. b) Check with your organisation's IT helpdesk re any firewall restrictions. c) Preferably, Google Chrome should be used to access the booking portal website as this is a modern browser that supports the website. d) Try another device/mobile phone to access the website.
KW5	Registration	What personal information will be required to register for antibody testing?	<p>Full name, address, email address, contact number, date of birth, your registered GP surgery, your NHS Number and demographic details – sex, ethnicity and occupation.</p> <p>The NHS number is mandatory. It must be entered with no spaces or dashes in-between (e.g. 10 x numbers, no spaces = XXXXXXXXXX). Please make sure that you do not enter your national insurance number instead of the NHS number.</p> <p>Personal details MUST be correct and include full name and surname as it would appear on your personal NHS record.</p>

Your antibody test will not be processed, if the above data does not match your personal NHS record.			
KW6	Data	How are you managing my personal data?	All data is managed in line with the Surrey Heartlands Information Governance framework. This is explained in detail when registering.
KW7	Registration	How do I register for a test?	<p>Your employing organisation will confirm the details of the testing programme in the first instance via internal communications and invite staff to book into testing clinics provided by the organisation.</p> <p>The booking portal website can be accessed through the links: 'surrey.trustwide.live' or 'surrey.trustwide.live/antibody-testing'.</p> <p>Once you have entered your personal information on the booking portal website, you will see a drop down list of all testing clinics available to the staff in your organisation; depending on how the clinics are organised by your organisation, you may or may not also be able to select an individual slot within the clinic date. Once you have selected appropriate date and slot (if appropriate), click 'Next', which will take you to the consent process.</p> <p>You will receive 3 emails from the booking portal website at the point of registration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - email 1 - email address verification – click on the link included in Email 1 to verify your email address; alternatively, copy the link from the email and paste it into your browser - email 2 - sharing login details for the system – make sure to keep the login details safe as you will be required to log back into the system to retrieve your results, when available; - email 3 - confirming clinic appointment details and attaching the blood form to be printed by you and taken with you to the clinic – the PDF form is password protected (the password is your date of birth).

KW8	I have not received the confirmation email with the PDF file.	<p>If you have not received 3 email (as above), then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> It is possible your registration has not completed – please re-start the registration process; If on re-starting registration process, the system says you are already registered, it is possible that you had received the ‘email 1’ – address verification, but have not completed the verification by clicking on the link in the email. Please complete the verification and then the system will complete the registration process; Please make sure that you are checking the correct email inbox – i.e. that this is the email account you used for the registration. Please check your junk mail folder.
KW9	<p>Registration</p> <p>Why can't I find my personal GP on the booking form?</p>	<p>The list of GP surgeries on the booking form is a fixed list based on the GPs with which the laboratory we are using for antibody testing has ICE information sharing arrangements with.</p> <p>If your personal GP is not on the list, choose 'Other' and arrangements will be made by the laboratory to share the results with your GP (who will be identified using your NHS number).</p>
KW10	<p>Registration</p> <p>I am trying to register for testing, but the website won't let me click on the calendar to choose a date.</p>	<p>Only open clinics with available slots will be visible on the website and allowing user to click on them to select a slot. If you are unable to click on a date, then either there is no clinic open for that date by your provider, or all the available slots for that date have been filled.</p> <p>Please try another date or await further communication from your provider to let you know when more clinics or slots will be made available.</p>
KW11	<p>Registration</p> <p>What do I do if I entered any of my personal data wrong in the registration form?</p>	<p>At the moment you are unable to amend any personal data once your registration has been completed. Every effort should be made to ensure that the data provided on the registration form is correct.</p> <p>If you identify that some or your data has been entered incorrectly, particularly date of birth and NHS number:</p>

- a) You will need to repeat the registration process as if you had not registered on the system before by creating a new registration in the booking portal website – you will have to use a different email address and telephone contact number to those used in the first registration.
- b) Email antibody testing queries inbox (syheartlandscgg.testing@nhs.net) and we will arrange for your first registration with incorrect details to be deleted from the booking system (this may take a few days).
- c) Check all the data is correct on the blood form (PDF form received in email 3) – amend data by hand on the blood form, if necessary.

We are working with our registration portal system provider to enable users to amend their own personal data in the booking portal system in the near future.

KW12	Testing Process	Do I need to take anything to the test with me?	<p>You must print out and bring with you to the clinic the blood form, received in the email confirming clinic appointment details (see 'KW7' above). The blood form go to the laboratory along with your blood sample.</p> <p>Please bring a mask to wear for the clinic, as well as observing social distancing.</p> <p>Please make sure you are well hydrated – it is helpful to bring water with you to the clinic.</p>
KW13	Testing process	I can't open the PDF blood form received in the confirmation email.	<p>When opening the PDF blood form, the system will prompt you for a password – enter your date of birth in the following format: dd/mm/yyyy.</p> <p>If you are still unable to open, please re-try again to make sure you have entered your date of birth in the correct format.</p> <p>If you are still unable to open:</p>

			<p>a) it is possible that you have entered date of birth incorrectly on your registration form. The quickest solution is to re-register on the portal using a different email address and telephone number (see KW11) – ensure that all the personal data entered is full and correct.</p> <p>b) Email antibody testing queries inbox (syheartlandsccg.testing@nhs.net) and we will arrange for your first registration with incorrect details to be deleted from the booking system (this may take a few days).</p>
KW14	Result process	I have forgotten my password.	Use this link https://surrey.trustwide.live/login-page to go to the login page and use the 'I have forgotten my password' function.
KW15	Result Process	Where can I get my results?	<p>When registering on the registration portal system you will create an account and receive login details (see 'KW7' above); using the login details, you will be able to access your result securely through your account. Simply log back into your account to access your result.</p> <p>Use this link to take you directly to the 'My Account' page: https://surrey.trustwide.live/my-account.</p>
KW16	Testing Process	When will I get my results?	We expect this will take up to 72 hours. However, we have experienced some delays with returning results to some users, particularly where there were discrepancies or gaps in the data received through the booking system (for example, errors in entering NHS number) when cross-checked with the NHS Spine, as well as some other technical reasons. We ask users to allow up to 2 weeks before they escalate as per KW17.
KW17	Result Process	I have not yet received my results, what do I do?	Please log back into your account and click on the 'Result Checker' icon. Results are up-loaded onto the registration portal system on a regular basis, so please re-check again after a few days have lapsed.

If you continue to experience issues in accessing/viewing your results after repeatedly accessing your account for several days, please contact us at: syheartlandscg.testing@nhs.net.

Appendix A - How to register for antibody test on the booking portal website?

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