

Covid-19 Update

Suspended confirmatory PCR tests - Reduced Isolation - Vaccination

Confirmatory PCR tests temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results (From 11th January 2022)

Currently, COVID-19 prevalence is high which means the chances of a false positive from a positive LFD result are very low. Therefore **from 11th January in England, people who receive positive lateral flow results for COVID-19 should report their result on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) [link] and must self-isolate immediately but will not need to take a follow-up PCR test.** After reporting a positive LFD test result, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace so that their contacts can be traced and must continue to self-isolate.

This is a temporary measure while COVID-19 rates remain high across the UK and reflects similar changes made this time last year in January 2021. Whilst levels of COVID-19 are high, the vast majority of people with positive LFD results can be confident that they have COVID-19. This approach reflects evidence on the high accuracy of LFD testing.

There are a few exceptions to this revised approach:

- *People who are eligible for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment (TTSP) will still be asked to take a confirmatory PCR if they receive a positive LFD result, to enable them to access financial support.*
- *People participating in research or surveillance programmes may still be asked to take a follow-up PCR test, according to the research or surveillance protocol.*
- *Around one million people in England who are at particular risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 have been identified by the NHS as being potentially eligible for new treatments. They will be receiving a PCR test kit at home by mid-January to use if they develop symptoms or if they get a positive LFD result, as they may be eligible for new treatments if they receive a positive PCR result. This group should use these priority PCR tests when they have symptoms as it will enable prioritised laboratory handling.*

People who test positive for COVID-19:

In line with the reduced self-isolation approach announced on 22nd December, **anyone who tests positive will be able to leave self-isolation 7 days after the date of their initial positive test if they receive two negative LFD results, 24 hours apart, on days 6 and 7 (see infographic 1 below).**

People with COVID-19 symptoms:

Anyone who develops one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms (new continuous cough, high temperature and loss/change in taste/smell) should still stay at home and self-isolate and take a PCR test. They must continue to self-isolate if they get a positive PCR test result, even if they have had a recent negative lateral flow test - these rules have not changed. **See infographic 2 below for information on how to reduce the spread of infection within a household with a positive case of COVID-19.** **People with symptoms that are not the main three Covid-19 symptoms (such as a runny nose, headache, sore throat, aches, nausea etc) can take a LFD test as part of their regular testing to check their Covid-19 status.**

Get Boosted – Importance of COVID-19 Vaccination

Evidence shows that the booster vaccination is extremely important in protecting against the Omicron variant of COVID-19 and there is currently plenty of vaccine capacity locally with further information available here:

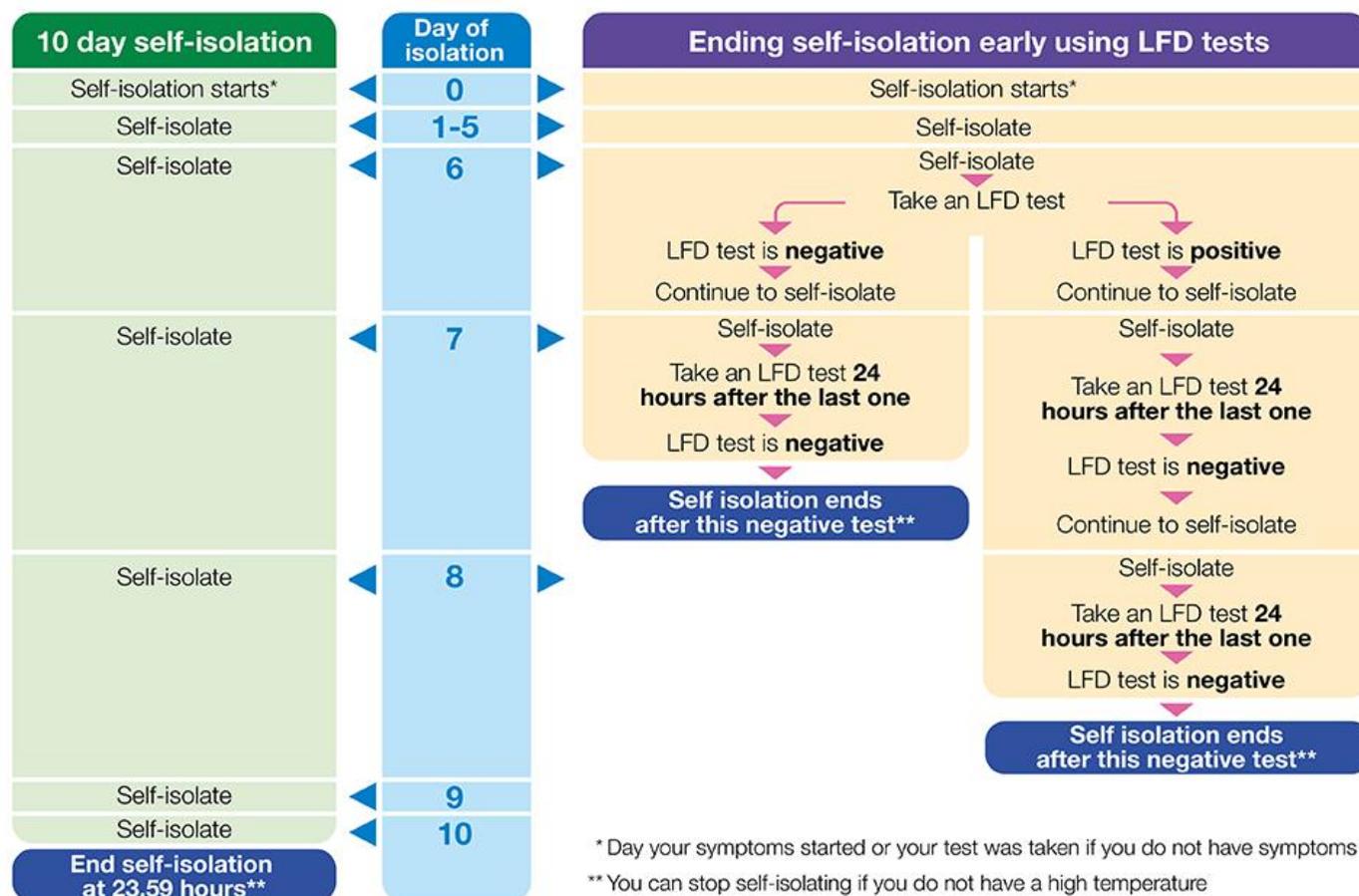
<https://www.birminghamandsolihullcovidvaccine.nhs.uk/>

The local Solihull walk-in vaccination centres on the High Street in Solihull town centre (near Halifax bank) is a very easy access point for people to go to if they have not had their 1st, 2nd and booster doses.

Vaccination is the most importance step people can take to protect themselves and their families/colleagues/friends from COVID-19.

Infographic 1:

If you have COVID-19 symptoms or have received a positive COVID-19 test result:



- This means that if, for example, your symptoms started at any time on the 15th of the month (or if you did not have symptoms but your first positive COVID-19 test was taken on the 15th), you may take daily LFD tests from the 21st of the month. If your LFD test results are negative on the 21st and 22nd, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your isolation period after the negative test result on the 22nd of the month.
- If both your LFD test results are negative, it is likely that you were not infectious at the time the tests were taken.
- ***There is no change to the guidance for unvaccinated contacts of positive COVID-19 cases, who are still required to self-isolate for 10 full days after their date of exposure to the virus.***

To further reduce the chance of passing COVID-19 on to others, if you end your self-isolation period before 10 full days you are strongly advised:

- to limit close contact with other people outside your household, especially in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces
- to work from home if you are able to
- in addition to venues where it is a legal requirement, to wear a face covering in crowded, enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces and where you are in close contact with other people
- to limit contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19
- to follow the guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread

For more information visit - [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19-infection)

Infographic 2:

How to reduce the spread of infection with the people you live with if you have COVID-19



How to reduce the spread of infection with the people you live with if you have COVID-19.

If you have COVID-19, there is a high risk that others in your household will catch it from you. There are several things you can do to reduce the spread of infection in your household.

- 1** Limit close contact with others. Spend as little time as possible in communal areas.



- 2** Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces and shared rooms like kitchens and bathrooms.



- 3** Wash your hands regularly using soap and water, particularly after coughing and sneezing.



- 4** Get help where possible from those you live with. Ask for help with cleaning and being brought food safely to avoid unnecessary contact.



- 5** Use a face covering if you need to spend time in shared spaces.



- 6** Keep rooms well ventilated.



- 7** Catch coughs and sneezes in disposable tissues and put them straight in the bin.



Link to the infographic:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1039983/20211207_Reducing_household_transmission.pdf

Public Health
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
January 2022