

5. COVID-19 Testing of Close Contacts of a Person with COVID-19



All close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19, whether they have symptoms or not, will be referred for a coronavirus test, in accordance with Public Health guidance. This is a change in procedure, as previously only close contacts who had symptoms were referred for a coronavirus test.

Why are close contacts being tested?

Close contacts are being tested as it is known that they are the people most likely to develop coronavirus themselves. By testing close contacts early in the process, people who are carrying the virus and have little or no symptoms will be identified.

Why are close contacts with no symptoms being tested?

Close contacts with no symptoms (known as asymptomatic) are being tested as they may be carrying the virus and inadvertently exposing other people. It is known that a person can be infectious for 48 hours prior to the development of symptoms. As their symptoms emerge, the person can be highly infectious.

How will close contacts be informed?

All close contacts receive a call from a Contact Tracing Centre to notify them that they are the close contact of a person with COVID-19. Asymptomatic close contacts are asked to restrict their movements for 14 days from the last date of contact with the person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Symptomatic close contacts are asked to self-isolate until they receive a 'not detected' test result, and 48 hours have passed since last symptoms. Thereafter, they will need to continue to restrict their movements until 14 days after last contact with the case. All close contacts will continue to receive Active Follow-Up (for more information, [click here](#)). All close contacts, regardless of whether they have symptoms or not, will now be referred for a test for coronavirus.

When will the close contact be tested?

The close contact will be referred as soon as possible following the call from the Contact Tracing Centre. It is anticipated that the test will happen that day or within 24 hours. Some close contacts will be referred for a second test.

What does testing involve?

The caller from the Contact Tracing Centre sends the person's key information (Name, Date of Birth, Full Address including County and Eircode, Mobile Phone Number, GP details) to Swiftqueue to arrange a test. The person will receive an appointment via text message to attend their local community assessment hub. If the person is unable to attend a test centre, they may arrange to be tested at home. The person will be swabbed in their nose and their mouth. This may be a little bit uncomfortable. The swab is then sent to a laboratory for testing and the person will receive their results in a couple of days. The test takes about 15 minutes. For more information on testing, [click here](#).

Why do some close contacts need two tests?

The National Public Health Emergency Team have recommended that all close contacts should be tested as soon as possible and again at day 7 after the last contact with a person if the first test was done soon after last contact. This is because the virus could develop in their system even if it is not detected in their first test. The person will be sent a text message with an appointment time for each of two tests, one at the time of the Contact Tracing Team's phone call to you, and one seven days after their last contact with a case.

The person may be scheduled for the second test before they have received the result of their first test. If this happens it is important that the person still attends the second test appointment. If the person's

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second test (day 7) is within 1 day of their first test appointment, they will not be scheduled for that second test appointment.

What if the person receives a positive result?

If the result is positive, the person will receive a telephone call from a Contact Tracing Centre, providing them with appropriate advice and contact tracing will commence, as they are now a confirmed case of COVID-19. Active follow up daily text messages will cease. Contact tracing will help identify any people the person has been in contact with, who may be at risk of catching coronavirus from the person. The person's GP will also be informed of the test result.

What if the person receives a negative / not detected result?

If the test is returned as COVID-19 'not-detected', the person will receive a text message with their result. The person will be asked to continue to restrict their movements, i.e. stay at home, not go to work, not have visitors in their house etc. for the remainder of the 14 days. This is because even though the test result is "not detected", the person may still develop COVID-19 anytime up to 14 days after the last date of contact with someone who has been diagnosed with coronavirus. If the person develops new symptoms before day 14, the person should contact their GP or the CTC call centre to arrange another test. The person will continue to receive active follow up daily text messages for 14 days.