

Clarification on the changes to the self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Changes to the self-isolation period for those who test positive for COVID-19

From Monday 17 January, people who are self-isolating with COVID-19 will have the option to reduce their isolation period after 5 full days if they test negative with a lateral flow device (LFD) test on both day 5 and day 6 and they do not have a temperature. For example, if they test negative on the morning of day 5 and the morning of day 6, they can return to their education or childcare setting immediately on day 6.

The first test must be taken no earlier than day 5 of the self-isolation period, and the second must be taken the following day. All test results should be [reported to NHS Test and Trace](#).

If the result of either of their tests is positive, they should continue to self-isolate until they get negative results from two LFD tests on consecutive days or until they have completed 10 full days of self-isolation, whichever is earliest.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests or anyone who continues to have a temperature will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation.

Further [information on self-isolation for those with COVID-19](#) is available.

PLEASE PROVIDE SCHOOL WITH A COPY OF POSITIVE/NEGATIVE LATERAL FLOW RESULT

Household contacts who are not required to self-isolate

If you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 you are at significantly higher risk of becoming infected yourself.

If you are fully vaccinated or aged under 18 years and 6 months, and you live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, you are not legally required to self-isolate.

LFD tests are very good at identifying people who have high levels of coronavirus and are most likely to pass on infection to others, even if you do not have symptoms. You are therefore strongly advised to take daily LFD tests during the period you are at highest risk of becoming infected yourself.

If you are aged 5 years and over and live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, and are not legally required to self-isolate, you are strongly advised to:

- take an LFD test every day for 7 days, or until 10 days after the household member who has COVID-19 started their self-isolation period if this is earlier
- take this daily LFD test before you leave your home for the first time that day

[Report your LFD test results](#) after taking each test.

From 6 January in Wales, and from 11 January in England, people without symptoms with a positive LFT result will no longer have to take a PCR test to confirm their status.

Instead, anyone who has a positive LFT test result must report their result online or by calling 119, and self-isolate. They will be contacted by Test and Trace in England, Test, Trace, Protect in Wales so their contacts can be notified, as happens now after a positive PCR.

The new testing guidance will remain in place while Covid case levels remain high, because the vast majority of people with positive LFT results at the moment are extremely likely to have coronavirus.

However, anyone with Covid symptoms - a cough, a fever or a loss of taste or smell - must still take a PCR test as soon as possible, and should stay at home and self-isolate while they wait for the result.

They must continue to self-isolate if the PCR test is positive, even if they have previously had negative LFTs.

If you take an LFD test and the result is positive, you should immediately self-isolate to prevent you from passing the infection on to other people.

Follow this advice until the household member who has COVID-19 reaches the end of their self-isolation period.

Children and young people aged under 18 years 6 months who usually attend an education or childcare setting and who have been identified as a close contact should continue to attend the setting as normal.

If you develop [symptoms](#) at any time, even if these are mild, stay at home and self-isolate immediately, [arrange to have a COVID-19 PCR test](#) and follow the [guidance for people with COVID-19 symptoms](#).

Department for Education guidance

Our guidance to support parents during the COVID-19 pandemic can be accessed using the link below:

- [Guidance for parents and carers](#)