



# A guide to...

# COVID-19 Testing for Patients

## Patient Information

### How to contact us

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net)



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## COVID-19 Testing for Patients

In order to protect our patients coming in for procedures at our hospital sites, we have introduced COVID-19 swab testing as part of the pre-assessment procedure. You will be given more information about this as part of your contact with your medical team but this leaflet is designed to give you an idea of what the swab test involves and what you can expect to happen.

### Where do I go for my swab?

Swabbing for patients takes place at both St Albans City Hospital and Watford General Hospital. The Watford test centre is a drive-through facility and the St Albans test centre is a walk-in centre. You will need pre-arranged appointments to attend either site.

### Getting to Watford General Hospital

**Directions:** This is a drive through swab centre situated opposite the Screw-Fix business centre along Thomas Sawyer Way as you approach Watford General Hospital via the back road. The postcode is WD18.

When you arrive at the test centre, please check in with security who will direct you to use either lane 1 or lane 2. Please wait at the sign until you are signalled to drive in. Please ensure you attend in the car with the registration details you provided the booking team.

When you arrive, it is essential that you remain inside your car with the windows closed and await instructions. Under **no circumstances** should anyone **arrive on foot or leave their car**.

When instructed, drive forward to where the nurse taking your COVID-19 swab is standing. You will need to wind down your car window at this point and the nurse will verify your details and go through some COVID-19 related questions then take the swab.

### Getting to St Albans City Hospital

**Directions:** The St Albans test centre is located in the Waverley wing, a standalone building to the front right of the Minor Injuries Unit. There is a short stay 15 minute free parking bay in front of Minor Injuries Unit which you can use.

When you arrive, you will be expected to wear a mask (unless you are exempt) during your visit to the hospital.

On arrival, please check in at the reception and the staff will confirm your details. You will be directed to one of the clinic rooms where a member of the team will go through some COVID-19 related questions and talk you through the swab process.

### **What happens when I get swabbed?**

Testing involves taking a throat swab and a nasopharyngeal swab. A long cotton bud is inserted into the back of your throat and the same is inserted at the back of the nose.

A video of the procedure can be accessed via this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fffSjmx8-2I&feature=youtu.be>.

While the swabbing is a safe and quick process, some patients may find it uncomfortable. Please avoid eating for an hour or two prior to testing, and bring a bottle of water in case you would like a drink after your swab.

It is important you do not use any nasal sprays or ointments for at least 24 hours prior to your test.

### **When do I get swabbed?**

We are advising all our patients to carefully self-isolate for **three days (or as advised by your clinical team)** before their admission date (except where your treatment needs to be done more urgently). This is to reduce the risk of picking up coronavirus (COVID-19) infection before your operation or procedure.

Your swab will usually be taken **72 hours** before your planned admission.

### **How do I find out my results?**

Test results will be communicated to you by the clinical team – usually within 24 hours depending on the time of day you are tested. If your test is negative, your procedure can go ahead provided you remain well. If you are unwell, your test is positive or you have been in contact with someone who has possible coronavirus, please discuss with your clinical team so they can make a decision about whether to proceed or postpone your planned procedure.

### **I might have symptoms, what do I do?**

If you test positive for COVID-19 or have the symptoms below, you should not come to the hospital for your planned admission or outpatient appointment unless you have discussed this with your clinician or admissions co-ordinator.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms of COVID-19 include new onset cough, fatigue, sudden loss of taste and smell, high temperature but also diarrhoea and vomiting and new onset joint pains.