

Hospital Testing for COVID-19

Summary table providing an overview of COVID-19 hospital testing, covering [1\) patients](#) and [2\) staff](#).

Changes have been made to testing requirements contained within the table below in line with DL 2022(29) issued on 22nd August 2022. LFD tests (or other non-PCR based tests) should now be used for asymptomatic patient testing (i.e. stop using PCR and PCR-based tests for general asymptomatic testing). This change aims to ease the service pressures resulting from management of individuals continuing to test positive with PCR-based tests and not being infectious.

When using this table the following applies;

- Reference to hospital '**admissions**' are those which require an overnight stay in hospital.
- Testing undertaken outwith the national programmes detailed below should be based on decision of clinical services e.g screening in critical care settings.
- NB: A negative test does not mean that the patient is not incubating the virus. Staff should practice vigilance in monitoring for any symptom onset in the patient and reinforce the importance of COVID-19 measures including hand hygiene, wearing of facemasks and respiratory etiquette.

Testing prior to an Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP)

A risk assessment should be undertaken prior to performing an AGP on patients and take account of any presenting respiratory symptoms. Optionally, LFD tests (or other non-PCR based tests) may also be used to support the risk assessment. Where there is no evidence of a respiratory virus, the AGP may be performed using Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs) and also negating the need for post AGP fallow times. NB: where SICPs are applied for an AGP, HCWs are still required to wear an FRSM and eye/face protection to protect against splash/spray generated by the AGP. Airborne precautions and subsequent post AGP fallow times are required for all patients undergoing an AGP where there is evidence of a respiratory virus. If an LFD (or other non-PCR based test) is positive at any point, a follow up PCR test is required and TBPs must commence.

1) Patient testing

Who is being tested	Type of test	Frequency
Requirement 1 All elective surgical patients should be tested prior to admission	LFD (or other non-PCR based tests)- fully vaccinated patients Laboratory based PCR test- patients who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Fully vaccinated patients – LFD (or other non-PCR based test) should be utilised prior to admission to support the pre surgical clinical risk assessment.➤ Patients who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated – A laboratory based PCR test should be undertaken with enough advance notice (but as close to the day of the planned surgery) to ensure there is a result available for the day of the planned surgery. An LFD (or other non-PCR based test) may also be undertaken for these patients on the day of surgery. This is to provide reassurance of post op clinical recovery. <p>See Appendix 19 of the NIPCM for full elective surgical IPC principles</p>

Who is being tested	Type of test	Frequency
		Note: If LFD (or other non-PCR based test) is positive at any point, a follow up PCR test is required and TBPs must commence.
<p>Requirement 2</p> <p>All planned medical admissions</p> <p><u>AND</u></p> <p>All emergency admissions incl maternity and mental health service</p> <p><u>AND</u></p> <p>Any other patient admitted to hospital not covered by the above groups (inc hospital transfers)</p>	<p>LFD (or other non-PCR based test) - asymptomatic</p> <p>Laboratory based PCR – essential for symptomatic patients only</p>	<p>➤ All admissions with absence of respiratory symptoms require a COVID-19 test on admission. LFD (or other non-PCR based test) should be used on admission. Repeat testing with LFD (or other non-PCR based test) on day 5 of admission may be undertaken if agreed necessary following a risk assessment by the local NHS Board.</p> <p>➤ Patients should be tested with LFD (or other non-PCR based test) to transfer to another care area/NHS board if deemed necessary and always if transferred to a high risk setting.</p> <p>➤ All admissions with viral respiratory symptoms require a laboratory based PCR test on admission. A Rapid Diagnostic Test (PCR or non-PCR based) or LFD may be used in addition to laboratory based PCR to support rapid patient placement decisions.</p> <p>➤ Perform new laboratory PCR test at any point in the inpatient stay if new onset of COVID-19 symptoms are recognised or there is a clinical indication to do so (PCR). A Rapid Diagnostic Test (PCR or non-PCR based) or LFD may be used in addition to a laboratory based PCR test to support rapid patient placement decisions.</p> <p>Note: If LFD (or other non-PCR based test) is positive at any point, a follow up PCR test is required and TBPs must commence.</p>

Who is being tested	Type of test	Frequency
Requirement 3 Duration of IPC precautions and discharge of COVID-19 patients	LFD (or other non-PCR based test)- early cessation of TBPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Testing is not routinely required for stepdown of IPC precautions or discharge of COVID-19 except in the following cases; ➤ Where there is a requirement to cease transmission based precautions early – See Duration of Precautions for COVID-19 in appendix 11 of the NIPCM. ➤ Testing may be required prior to discharge from a hospital to a care home (see PHS COVID-19 – Information and guidance for social, community and residential care settings) and may also be considered prior to discharge if someone in the household is immunocompromised or for severely immunocompromised individuals. ➤ Further information can be found in the Duration of Precautions for COVID-19 in appendix 11 of the NIPCM.
Serial testing	LFD (or other non-PCR based test)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Serial testing of any patient group to reduce nosocomial transmission must be determined locally based on local intelligence (including prevalence and incidence of nosocomial transmission) and risk assessments. ➤ Serial testing does not replace the testing requirements above. <p>Note: LFD (or other non-PCR based test) is positive at any point, a follow up PCR test is required and TBPs must commence.</p>
Testing contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases	LFD (or other non-PCR based test)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Individuals identified as contacts may be tested using LFD (or other non-PCR based test) daily for 10 days from the date of exposure to prevent the need to apply TBPs where tests remain negative. If LFD (or other non-PCR based test) is positive at any point, a follow up PCR test is required and TBPs must commence.

Who is being tested	Type of test	Frequency
Tested as part of a hospital outbreak	<p><u>Symptomatic</u> Laboratory based PCR test (essential) Rapid Diagnostic Test (PCR or non-PCR based) or LFD (to support rapid patient placement)</p> <p><u>Asymptomatic</u> LFD (or other non-PCR based test)</p>	<p>➤ Proactive case finding should be supported during an outbreak through selected testing of any suspected symptomatic cases and, when indicated, asymptomatic testing as determined locally</p>
Any patient who develops symptoms should be tested immediately, and testing should be considered where there is clinical suspicion of COVID-19.	<p>Laboratory based PCR test (essential)</p> <p>Rapid Diagnostic Test (PCR or non-PCR based) or LFD (to support rapid patient placement)</p>	<p>➤ Any patient who develops symptoms should be tested immediately using laboratory based PCR.</p> <p>➤ Rapid Diagnostic Test (PCR or non-PCR based) or LFD may be used in addition to laboratory based PCR test to support rapid patient placement decisions whilst PCR results are awaited.</p>

2) Staff testing

Staff testing requirements are detailed on the Scottish Government website and can be found at the following links;

- [Asymptomatic staff testing](#)
- [Managing Health and Social Care staff with symptoms of a respiratory infection, or a positive COVID-19 test as part of the test and protect transition plan.](#)