

**Women and Support Person COVID
Testing for Antenatal Appointments
(HGS ONLY)**

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

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CLASSIFICATION:	Clinical
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Version Control

Version	Title	Issue Date
1	Women and Support Person COVID Testing for Scan Appointments	17/06/2021
2	Women and Support Person COVID Testing for Antenatal Appointments	18/01/2022
2.1	Women and Support Person COVID Testing for Antenatal Appointments (HGS ONLY)	18/05/2022

1 Procedure Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure a standardised process to reintroduce attendance of a birth partner or support person into the hospital setting, the priority is the safety of all service users including staff and visitors.
- 1.2 The National Health Service England (NHSE) document “Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic: Actions for NHS providers” (Dec, 2020) outline’s how this can be achieved safely however, where not yet possible, organisations will address to provide solutions to overcome remaining challenges to afford the support of a birth partner or support person during pregnancy.
- 1.3 This document should be used in conjunction with the: Standard Operating Procedure for the Management and Surveillance of SARS Cov-2 Infection in Pregnancy.

2 Maintaining a COVID Safe Maternity Service

- 2.1 The government’s strategy for keeping COVID transmission low centres on:
 - Good hand hygiene – this is encouraged by clearly signposting hand-washing stations or alcohol gel
 - Good respiratory hygiene through the “Catch it, bin it, kill it” approach (e.g. using a tissue to catch coughs or sneezes and immediately disposing of this in a bin)
 - Complying with 2-metre (or 1m minimum where appropriate) social distancing – all Trust ward, clinic and public spaces have been set up to support social distancing
 - Staff, women and support people using personal protective equipment (PPE), as directed by national guidance
 - Introduction of lateral flow testing on a voluntary basis for all staff
 - Immunisation of healthcare workers
- 2.2 Support people should be asked to follow these measures. They should be advised that non-compliance will result in them being asked to leave.
- 2.3 Restricted movement around the service

Movement to other areas of the hospital is restricted unless required as part of care for the woman should be maintained at all times – i.e. support person attending antenatal appointments. Support person should also be asked to reduce as much as practically possible leaving and returning to the clinic areas, to help with supporting restricted movement and coming into contact with other members of the public and staff.

3 The Support Person

- 3.1 The support person may be the baby's father or co-parent, but it does not need to be. Support people are not 'visitors' because they carry out a support role.
- 3.2 A woman may opt to be accompanied by a different support person at different appointments. This is as long as the necessary safety measures set out in the guidance are followed to ensure the safety of the pregnant woman, the support person, other hospital users and staff.
- 3.3 The process for women and support people accessing testing is required to be timely and efficient to ensure the impact on clinical care is not affected. Treat support people who test negative as part of the team supporting the woman.
- 3.4 If the woman has attended without having had a test but the support partner has a negative test result then the support partner should be enabled to attend the appointment with the woman.
- 3.5 Women should not be refused access to asymptomatic partners without recent possible exposure to COVID-19 infection, where appropriate infection control can be maintained through other means e.g social distancing, the wearing of appropriate PPE
- 3.6 What happens if a support person declines the offer of a test?
If the support person declines the test and there are other mitigations (social distancing, the wearing of appropriate PPE) in place to manage the identified risk they could be facilitated to accompany the woman. If they have declined to have a test prior to the appointment and other mitigations are not possible to manage then the support person will not be able to accompany the woman to that appointment.

4 Accessing a COVID Test

- 4.1 An information sheet with testing information (See Appendix 1) will be provided to the woman alongside her booking letter
- 4.2 The woman and her chosen support person should be advised that they need to undertake a lateral flow test 24 hours prior to attending for appointment.
- 4.3 It is essential that the woman and her chosen support person's results from the lateral flow test is brought with them to the scheduled appointment. This should be the report that is generated by the NHS App. So an email or text message

with the result should be available for staff to see at the time of the appointment.

5 Potential outcomes for women and or support person wanting to attend an Antenatal Appointment

5.1 Table 1 below outlines the potential outcomes for women and or support person wanting to attend an **Antenatal Appointment** following receipt of test result or in the event that the woman or support person decline the test and is written on the basis of woman or support person being asymptomatic of symptoms suggestive of COVID:

Woman	Support Person	Action
Negative	Positive	<p>Support person cannot attend- self isolates at home. If partner lives with the woman, she will be treated as potentially infected. Clinical team to consider whether appointment can safely be delayed. If not, woman should be treated as a possibly positive case with relevant guidelines followed.</p> <p>Woman may identify an alternative support person from within 'bubble' who is not self-isolating and who will be asked to be undertake a lateral flow test prior to the appointment– attendance at the appointment will dependant on result of the lateral flow.</p>
Positive	Positive	<p>Clinical team to consider whether appointment can be delayed for 10 days. If not, woman should attend but team should follow Covid guidance.</p> <p>Support person with positive result cannot attend appointment. Support person self isolates in line with national guidance and obtains a PCR test if result is via lateral flow test</p>
Positive	Negative	<p>Clinical team to consider whether appointment can be delayed for 10 days. If not, woman should attend but team should follow Covid+ guidance.</p> <p>If the support person is a contact of the women they will be legally required to self-isolate in line with national guidance. Unless they satisfy the Government guidance of having a NEGATIVE PCR test and being fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since their final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS</p> <p>If not household contact (no previous contact within 48 hours) will need support to understand they will need to isolate following appointment as they will have become a contact.</p>
Positive	Declines PCR Test	<p>Clinical team to consider whether appointment can be delayed for 10 days. If not, woman should attend but team should follow Covid+ guidance. Support person not allowed in.</p> <p>In absence of test result, support person unable to attend, assumed as positive and self-isolates at home if household contact (any contact within the last 48 hours).</p>

		<p>Woman may identify an alternative support person from a different household within 'bubble' who is not self-isolating and who will be asked to undertake a lateral flow test prior to the appointment– attendance at appointment dependant on result.</p>
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6 References

NHSE (Dec 2020) Supporting Pregnant Women using Maternity Services during the Covid Pandemic: Action for NHS Providers

Standard Operating Procedure for the Management and Surveillance of SARS Cov-2 Infection in Pregnancy Version 3

Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic: actions for NHS providers Version 2, 15 April 2021 C1243

Lateral flow antigen test for pregnant women and support people
Frequently asked questions April 2021 C1242

Appendix 1

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Attending an Antenatal Appointment & Covid Testing

Our priority is to keep you and your baby safe.

Therefore we are asking all pregnant women attending for antenatal appointments or scan to have a Lateral Flow Covid Test result 24 hrs prior to attending appointment.

If you wish your partner to attend the appointment with you then they too will need to have a lateral flow test result. This is regardless of whether you have any symptoms of Covid-19 or not,

Testing results, whether positive or negative, will impact how we manage your care, and indicates if it is safe for you and others for your partner to accompany you. This leaflet explains in more detail how testing for you and your support partner works for antenatal appointments only.

About testing

Why is it important for me and my support partner to have the screening test?

It is currently expected that a low number of women and support partners will have a positive result without having any symptoms of Covid-19 (about 1–2%).

Knowing whether someone has a negative or positive result helps the midwives and doctors plan the best care for you. This includes making sure you are placed in the most appropriate areas for your care. It also provides you with information so that you can protect yourself, your baby and those who you live with.

Why should support partners be tested

Testing support partners has been introduced to enable us to safely allow your chosen person to accompany you on site whilst also ensuring we are protecting you, our staff and other people using our hospital. Where there are exceptional circumstances, these will need to be discussed in advance and agreed by the clinical team.

When do we need to get a test?

We are asking all women and their support partner (if applicable) to undertake a Lateral Flow Covid Test **24 hours** prior to their appointment or scheduled admission. As the test cannot detect any future transmission of the virus it's really important that you isolate following the test in order to limit your exposure to coronavirus.

The Lateral flow test device (LFD) testing is a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, but who may still be spreading the virus.

How do we get a test ?

Access to the NHS website will give you up to date information of where you can obtain a test from

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/get-tested-for-coronavirus/#>

Alternatively you can order home testing kits from the NHS website

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/>

Reporting your result

You and support partner will need to report your test result on the NHS Covid web page

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/test-results/report-a-rapid-lateral-flow-test-result/>

You will receive confirmation email or text and this is what need to be shown on entry into Maternity Unit for any appointments.

What your results mean in relation to your care

The questions and answers below should hopefully answer many of the questions you might have, including the different scenarios in relation to both your own and your support partners test result.

It's really important that we still see you and can care for you and your baby within the right timescales. Where you are in your pregnancy journey will have an impact on the options available in relation to planned appointments.

What does it mean if I have a negative result?

A negative result means that at the time the swab was taken no Covid-19 coronavirus could be detected, however it does not tell you if you have already had the infection. You must still take precautions such as maintaining social distancing, handwashing and wearing a mask to prevent infection.

Both my support partner and I tested negative

If your support partner and you both receive a negative test result then they can accompany you at your appointment. This is subject to the normal restrictions that they must not be self-isolating following coming in to contact with a confirmed case or displaying any of the symptoms of Covid-19.

What does it mean for my appointment if I have a positive result?

If you have a positive result we will assess the need to rebook your appointment after the 10 day isolation period. If it is essential that you need to attend the appointment we will make all the necessary arrangements and precautions for you to attend the appointment.

I tested positive but my support partner tested negative, what does this mean?

If your support partner has been in contact with you within the last 48 hours then they will be legally required to self-isolate for 10 days unless they satisfy the Government guidance of having a PCR test <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> and being recorded as negative and also evidence of being fully vaccinated – this means 14 days have passed since their final dose of a COVID-19 vaccine given by the NHS

My support partner tested positive

If your support partner tests positive then they will not be able to accompany you at this time and must self-isolate at home, in line with national guidance.

My support partner doesn't want to be tested

If your support partner declines the test then they will not be able to accompany you.

What about if I have tested positive in the last 90 days?

If you are able to show evidence of a positive test result in the last 90 days (not including the last 10 days in which you would be required to self-isolate), and you have no symptoms, then you will not need to be tested. This is because if you have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days and are not in a current isolation period, you have developed antibodies to the virus and your next test result could continue to appear as positive, even though you are no longer symptomatic or contagious.

What does a positive test result mean?

It is unclear what the significance of a positive screening result is in the absence of any symptoms. It may mean that you have had a mild infection in the last 28 days; you could have a current infection without symptoms that you have noticed; or, you could be incubating Covid-19 and may develop symptoms in a few days.

Unfortunately there is nothing that we can do to identify which of the above reasons apply, which is why we have to treat anyone with a positive result as potentially infectious.

Following a positive test result you will be advised to self-isolate for 7 days and the Public Health England Stay-at-Home guidance should be followed for you and anyone you live with, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>.

What effect does coronavirus have on pregnant women and babies?

You can find more information on pregnancy and coronavirus on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/pregnancy-and-coronavirus/>

If after reading this leaflet you still have questions please talk to your midwife or contact our Covid-19 Maternity Hotline on 0121 335 8234.