

LATERAL FLOW TESTING

Procedure

WHAT ARE LATERAL FLOW DEVICE TESTS?

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests check whether or not someone may have COVID-19 without the need for laboratory processing, and provide a result within 30 minutes. They are a fast and simple way to test people who do not have symptoms of Covid-19, but who may still be spreading the virus. LFD tests are different to the PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) tests, which are used for people who have COVID-19 symptoms and must be sent to a lab.

LATERAL FLOW TEST ACCURACY

According to the Department for Education (DfE) and Public Health England, LFD tests are accurate and sensitive enough for community screening, stating that these tests have been successfully used to detect COVID-19 in people without symptoms.

Even those who receive a negative result from the LFD test should still continue to practice social distancing and other protective measures, as stated in the COVID-19 Operating Procedures, and remember 'Hands, Face, Space'.

STAFF AND TESTING

LFD tests will be offered to all staff at the setting.

It is not compulsory for staff to participate in LFD testing if any wish to opt out of the scheme, though it is strongly encouraged. Staff who decline to take the tests can still work in the setting.

Staff who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 are exempt from LFD testing for 90 days after their positive result. This is because fragments of inactive virus can be persistently detected in respiratory tract samples following infection, long after the person has completed their isolation period and are no longer infectious. However, if COVID-19 symptoms redevelop/develop, staff should book a PCR test.

Staff who have received their vaccine are encouraged to take part in the LFD testing scheme. It is not yet known if vaccinations prevent transmission of the virus. The vaccine will not interfere with the LFD test results.

LFD tests are safe for pregnant women to use.

All LFD test dates should be logged in the staff signing in/out log, so this can be recorded by management.

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Procedure

STORING TESTS

Tests should be kept indoors, between 2-30 degrees. If they are stored somewhere below 15 degrees, the tests will need to be moved to a warmer room for around 30 minutes before they are used.

DISTRIBUTING TESTS

Testing kits will be distributed to all staff who wish to take part in the LFD testing scheme.

Full instructions on how to use the tests are provided with the test kits. Each box contains seven tests, although you may only be given enough for one week at a time, depending on nursery stock.

The setting will keep a test kit log, recording which member of staff has taken which kits home, in case there is an incident requiring investigation or batch recall.

TAKING THE TESTS

Staff should perform the tests at home, not at the setting. This is because the risk of transmission is reduced if a staff member tests positive at home rather than in the setting.

Tests should be taken twice a week with a gap of three or four days between each test.

The tests should ideally be used in the morning, before coming into work, though the DfE advises that staff can also test on a Sunday evening.

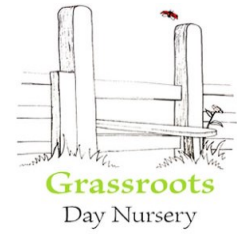
Any staff who work part-time should still be tested twice weekly, in the same intervals.

Staff should avoid drinking or eating in the half-hour before taking the test – although drinking a small amount of water should be okay. The DfE says that brushing your teeth is “unlikely” to have an impact on the test but advises waiting a while after doing so before testing.

TEST RESULTS

Negative result

Staff members who return a negative result from the LFD test should log their result via the NHS Test and Trace self-report gov.uk page and complete the test date in the staff signing in/out log. They can continue to work as normal, ensuring to continue following COVID-19 guidelines. The DfE has advised that there is no requirement to provide proof of a negative result, such as a photograph of the test.



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Positive result

If a staff member returns a positive result from the LFD test, they should report their results to NHS Test and Trace as soon as the test is complete, via the self-report gov.uk page. They must also inform the setting, so that close contacts can be identified, and procedures can be followed.

The member of staff and the rest of their household should immediately self-isolate. The staff member will also need to book a PCR test to confirm the result.

If the follow up PCR test is negative, they and their household can stop isolating.

If the PCR test is also positive, then the staff member should continue to isolate (alongside any other members of their household) in line with Stay at Home guidance and inform the setting of the positive PCR result.

Void test

This means that the test has not worked correctly, and the staff member should take another test as soon as possible – ideally on the same day. This should be with a new test. Nothing from the first test should be reused.

The result should still be reported to NHS Test and Trace, via the self-report gov.uk page.

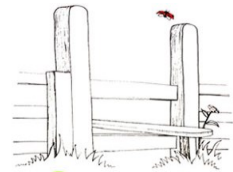
If more than one test has a void result, you may have a faulty batch of test kits – let us know. Nursery are keeping a log of all tests distributed to staff and batch/lot numbers as advised.

Test and Trace contact

If a staff member has been contacted by NHS Test and Trace, they must self-isolate for 10 days immediately. Even if a staff member then returns a negative LFD test result, they must still isolate. LFD test results cannot be used to allow individuals to end self-isolation.

Reporting results to the setting

All LFD test results must be reported to the setting. This is because there is no way for the setting to access staff test results through the NHS reporting system, so the setting must be informed directly. All details will be kept securely and confidentially.



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Policy/Procedure name: Lateral Flow Testing	
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Signed:.....(Proprietor/Manager)	
Signed:.....(Deputy Manager)	