

COVID -19 Test and Trace is even more significant as the country eases out of lockdown.

But what does this mean for Manchester people?

Contact tracing is important to help us to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to contain and stop outbreaks. Contact tracing is a tried and tested method for public health to control the spread of many infectious diseases.

It works by identifying contacts of people who have tested positive and by encouraging them to self-isolate and closely monitor their health, rather than continuing to mix with others and passing the virus on. Contacts who then develop symptoms will need to take a test.

The city's Director of Public Health, David Regan answers your questions here on the latest details around testing, tracing, isolating and what you should do if you think you or someone you know may have contracted COVID-19.

1. What should I do if I think I have Coronavirus symptoms?

Stay home and self-isolate for seven days. Members of your household should self-isolate too for 14 days from the point where you started having symptoms.

Book a COVID-19 test immediately on [NHS.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus) or telephone 119 if you do not have internet access. The test is most accurate in the first five days of having symptoms. And remember the symptoms are fever, a persistent or new cough, and loss of sense of smell and taste. You should isolate yourself if you have any of the symptoms and only leave your house when going to get your test.

There are various local options in Manchester for getting a test by the booking system, which you will be directed to including a site at Manchester Airport and the Etihad Stadium premises.

a. What happens if my test is positive?

If your test is positive for COVID-19 you will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace within 24 hours and asked to give contact details of people you have come into close, recent contact with and the places you have visited. (These details will be entered onto a secure website). You must also complete the rest of your 7-day self-isolation. Members of your household should also complete their 14-day self-isolation period from when you started to have symptoms.

The contact tracing team will then find those people you came into contact with using email and phone numbers and will tell them to self-isolate for 14 days even if they do not have any symptoms.

b. What if my COVID-19 test is negative?

Your household can stop isolating immediately. Sometimes you can get a false negative depending on what stage the test was taken - that's why it's so important to have the test in the first five days of symptoms.

But, as long as you feel well you can stop self-isolating immediately. If you are still feeling unwell contact the NHS 111 service or your doctor online or on the phone to get advice.

COVID-19 Test and Trace

c. What happens if I have been in close contact with someone who tests positive?

You may be alerted by NHS Test and Trace and will be asked to begin self-isolation for up to 14 days, depending on when you last came into contact with the person who tested positive. It's really important to do this even if you don't feel unwell because it can take some time for symptoms to develop. At this point your household doesn't need to self-isolate with you, but they must take extra care on social-distancing and washing hands.

2. What if I develop COVID-19 symptoms while I am self-isolating?

You must book a test as soon as you think you have symptoms on nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119 if you do not have internet access. And, now, your household must also self-isolate.

a. What if my test is positive?

If your test is positive, you then begin a new 7-day period of self-isolation and your household must complete their 14-day self-isolation period, which started from the point when you developed symptoms.

b. What if my test is negative?

If your test is negative, your household can stop self-isolating immediately, but you must complete your 14-day self-isolation.

3. That sounds like a lot of advice – is there anything else I can do to stay safe and well?

Yes, keep following all the rules around regular handwashing; wipe surfaces and handles; make sure you cough or sneeze into a tissue and then bin it properly; and above all, keep on with social distancing.