

Obtaining a Covid-19 Diagnostic Swab Test in Care Homes

You must know the steps to follow before performing a diagnostic swab test and read the instructions that come with the swab testing kit. Ensure you are familiar with your local laboratory guidance. Any specimen samples that arrive at the laboratory without the appropriate paperwork **will not be tested**.

The procedures described below are designed to be carried out **with one resident at a time**.



Further information on Coronavirus (COVID-19) can be found at:
<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/>

Before performing the swab test, you must:

1. Explain to your resident you are going to take a sample from their nose and throat, and gain consent if possible. Explain that performing the test may cause them a little discomfort. Have a colleague to assist you if possible.
2. Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub. Put on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This includes fluid resistant surgical face mask, disposable plastic apron, disposable nitrile gloves, and visor or eye protection. **Always change your apron and gloves prior to starting the testing of another resident.**



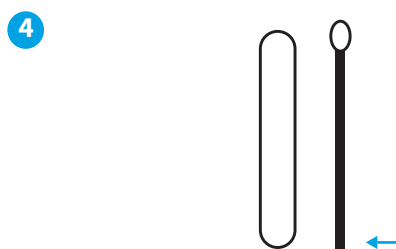
On a **clean dry surface** lay out the components of the kit and ensure complete and intact.



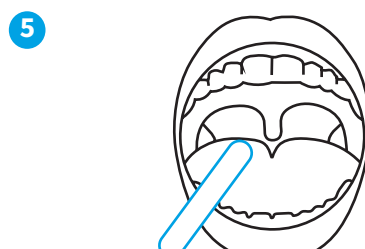
Check the resident's identity against the pre-printed labels and request form.



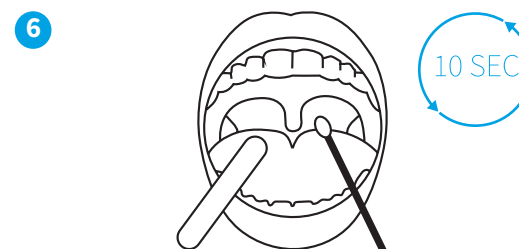
Ask the resident to gently blow their nose and cough into a tissue. **Dispose immediately in a bin.**



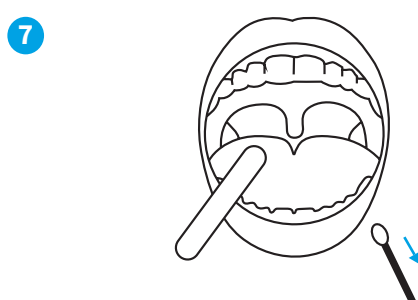
Remove swab from package, **holding it at the end of the stick**. Do not touch the tip of the swab to **avoid contamination**.



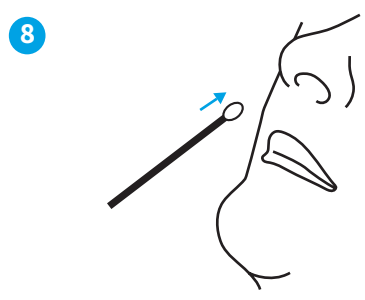
To obtain a throat swab, gently tilt their head slightly back and open their mouth wide to **expose the tonsils and back of the throat**.



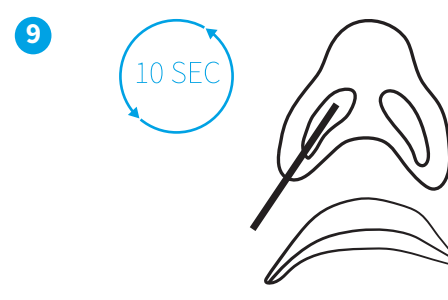
Do not to touch the tongue, teeth, or gums with the swab. **Place swab right at the back of the mouth**, and rotate it along the back of the throat and tonsils for 10 seconds.



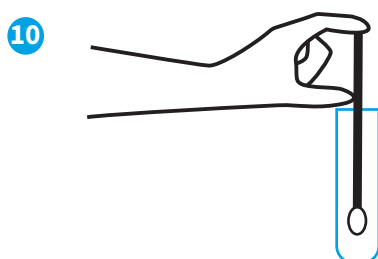
Remove the swab from the person's mouth being careful **not to touch the tongue, teeth, or gums**.



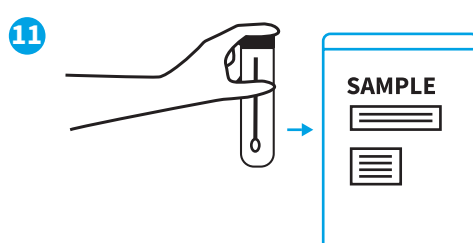
Gently insert the same swab, along the floor of the nasal passage about one inch (2.5cm) into the nostril until gentle resistance is felt.



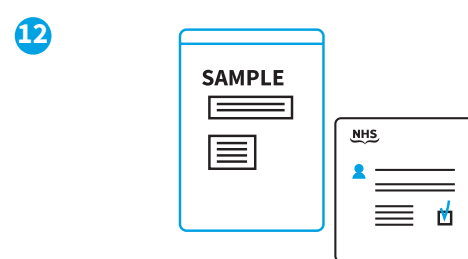
Rotate the swab gently against the mucosa for 10-15 seconds. **If the person complains of pain or becomes distressed, you must stop and remove the swab.**



Remove the swab from the nose carefully **without touching** the external nasal skin or face. Place the tip of the swab into the viral medium.



Use the pre-printed labels and request form. **Do not put** request forms in the bag with the sample container. Place them in a separate section of the specimen collection bag. Wipe down sample bag with an antibacterial wipe.



Package the sample as per national guidelines. Remove your PPE and perform hand hygiene. Send the specimens to your nominated NHS laboratory. Record that a Covid-19 diagnostic swab sample has been obtained in your resident's records.