

April 2021

## Local pharmacies now stocking COVID tests

Community pharmacy teams in Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth are this month starting to offer free coronavirus (COVID-19) test kits as they help to support the lifting of national restrictions and the pandemic recovery.

The new 'Pharmacy Collect' service will make coronavirus test kits – known as lateral flow devices – readily available to people without symptoms free of charge from local NHS pharmacies.

Pharmacy Collect offers a convenient location to collect these test kits from. NHS Test and Trace research found that people prefer to access testing close to home, with pharmacists trusted by their local communities. The consumer healthcare association, Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB), also found that since the start of the pandemic, almost one in three people are now more likely to visit a pharmacy for advice before seeking help elsewhere.

Anyone can request a box of test kits from the pharmacy counter for regular testing at home or elsewhere.

The test distribution service from pharmacies, along with other locations, sits under NHS Test and Trace and forms part of the Government's [COVID-19 roadmap](#) plan. Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Easter Monday that everyone in England would be given access to two free coronavirus tests a week. It is hoped that widening the offer of tests will help to identify COVID-positive cases in the community and break the chain of transmission, avoiding the need for further lockdowns.

You can use the NHS Test and Trace Site Finder map to locate participating pharmacies in your area: <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/>

### **Mak Johal, Local pharmacist at Chapel Pharmacy said:**

"As a community pharmacist, I am really excited about starting the Pharmacy Collect service. Our pharmacy has been offering public health services for several years and my patients have been extremely positive about these. There is so much that pharmacists and their teams can do to help our communities as the COVID restrictions are eased.

Community pharmacies are the most accessible healthcare locations; we offer convenient access to medicines and a range of health services without the need for an appointment. This will be of particular value in this service, where we can really help those who may not be able to travel far to access these tests. Pharmacy hasn't stopped during the pandemic: community pharmacies in England continue to have 600,000 informal healthcare consultations a week. This shows that patients value the convenience of being able to choose to get health services from their local pharmacy."

### **Deborah Crockford, Chief Officer said:**

"Community pharmacy provision of COVID testing means that people in Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth will have greater access to this service. Many people may choose pharmacy for health services because they can visit pharmacies in a variety of locations and at a time that suits them.

Community pharmacists are looking forward to doing their bit as people return to work and education. This is just one of many examples of how pharmacy teams have helped support patients, the public and the nation during the pandemic."

**Alastair Buxton, PSNC Director of NHS Services, said:**

“It’s fantastic that people without symptoms are able to walk into local community pharmacies to access free lateral flow tests to use at home. Pharmacies are at the heart of local communities: they have offered face-to-face healthcare advice throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and they are pleased to support the national testing programme. Many pharmacies have already begun offering this service, with many more expected to start in the next two weeks.”

**Notes for Editors**

Further information about Pharmacy Collect

The NHS Test and Trace Site Finder map can be used to locate participating pharmacies: <https://maps.test-and-trace.nhs.uk/> (this will be updated on a weekly basis)

Additional background information on the NHS community pharmacy COVID-19 lateral flow device (LFD) distribution service (promoted to the public as ‘Pharmacy Collect’) is available on the PSNC website: [psnc.org.uk/LFD](https://psnc.org.uk/LFD)

About community pharmacy

There are approximately 11,300 NHS community pharmacies in England providing accessible healthcare alongside the dispensing of medicines. Pharmacies are usually open for longer hours than other NHS providers and 90% of the population can walk to one in 20 minutes.

Pharmacy’s role in COVID-19

NHS community pharmacies have remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting to provide services in a COVID-secure way for their local communities and offering face-to-face advice and healthcare on a walk-in basis.

Key statistics:

- Patients have relied on pharmacies more than ever before: almost one in three people (31%) who would not previously have visited a pharmacy for advice before seeking help elsewhere said they were more likely to do so following the pandemic. ([PAGB Survey, July 2020](#))
- Over 600,000 consultations responding to patient symptoms are carried out in English community pharmacies per week, and nearly 185,000 consultations are carried out where pharmacies give patients additional support for a known medical condition. ([PSNC Pharmacy Advice Audit, September 2020](#))
- These consultations mean that patients avoid needing nearly 500,000 GP appointments and 57,000 weekly A&E and walk-in centre visits every week. ([PSNC Pharmacy Advice Audit, September 2020](#))

Contact

Community Pharmacy South Central (CPSC) represents community pharmacy contractors (owners) in Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth. For further information on this press release please contact:

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