

Scottish autism

WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE
ARE VALUED

Does my child or the person I am supporting have to get tested?

The Scottish and UK governments are providing testing followed by 'contact tracing' as a vital step to getting the Covid-19 outbreak under control. For some people however, the anticipated level of discomfort and/or distress involved in testing may mean that this is not possible.

These people may, understandably, have concerns that they will be encouraged to get tested if they need to contact the NHS with Covid-19 symptoms.

Please be aware: You should contact the NHS if showing symptoms, to get the right information, advice and support. However, a test will not be taken without consent. Here is some advice around discussing and making a decision on whether to be tested or not:

Advance preparation in case of contracting Covid-19

Our resource sheets: [Supporting Someone with the Testing Process](#) and [Giving 'Informed Consent' to Covid-19 Testing](#) provide more understanding of what testing and giving consent involves.

It may be helpful to have an advanced discussion on the issues around getting tested with a GP or other involved health professionals.

It may be helpful to note down reasons why testing may not be appropriate (see below*) in advance of this discussion.

During this discussion, more information on the details of the test procedure can be requested.

Information on 'reasonable adjustments' (e.g. testing in a quiet space; specifying a male or female tester; 'stimming' or other activities to reduce anxiety) that might make testing possible can also be requested and discussed to try to identify whether these may make the process possible for the person.

If contacting [NHS Inform](#) about Covid-19 symptoms:

If advised to get a test due to showing symptoms, *consent* is required to do this (or not) for example verbally and by turning up (*or not*), at a testing centre, or by requesting a home testing kit (*or not*).

Although getting tested is an essential part of the Test and Protect process, *it is not enforced* (and in Scotland testing isn't carried out on children under 5). If the person is not reassured by the steps that can be taken to support them to be tested, testing will not be forced upon them.

An advantage of getting tested, though, is that a negative test result means your child or the person you are supporting can stop self-isolating. For families this would also mean whole households would not need to self-isolate if it was just their child who was showing symptoms.

Remember that consent can be withdrawn at any time (see [Giving 'Informed Consent' to Covid-19 Testing](#))

It's worth adding that, even if someone wants a test, they may be too far from a testing centre and a home testing kit can't be guaranteed, due to high demand.

Remember, if you or someone you support is experiencing Covid-19 symptoms, follow self-isolation guidelines (see our resource [Stage 3: Isolate](#)) and phone NHS 111 or go online to [NHS Inform](#) where you can access an online self-help guide.

We hope that this information, and our other resources on [Test and Protect](#) will be helpful in guiding you on the options available.

**Possible reasons why testing may be unacceptable to some people include: over sensitivity to certain types of touch, pressure and/or smell (e.g. heightened sense of pain); fear of invasive treatment following previous difficult experience (e.g. dental or medical); fear of new situations and people. Such difficulties may of course be exacerbated if the person is feeling unwell.*

Other aspects to consider are ease of leaving home/one's familiar routine and whether this is likely to increase anxiety; distance from a testing centre and whether a home testing kit would be possible and/or preferable to a testing centre.

This document was updated on the 12th of August, 2020. This information has been written as clearly as possible for a wide readership. If you require support with this information then please make contact with our [Autism Support Team](#).