

# Scottish autism

WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE  
ARE VALUED

## Do I 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. Some people may be worried that the test will be too uncomfortable for them, perhaps if they are over-sensitive to touch.

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

Please be reassured: *a test will not be given without your consent*. You should contact the NHS if showing symptoms so that you get the right information, advice and support.

Here is some information to help guide you if you need to discuss being tested and when thinking about getting tested:

### Advance preparation in case you get Covid-19

Read our [Test and Protect resources](#) to increase your understanding of what testing and the follow up to testing involves.

Even if you are not showing symptoms of Covid-19, it may be helpful to have an advance discussion with your GP or other involved health professional if you have any concerns about getting tested in the future.

It may be helpful to note down reasons why you are concerned about getting tested (see below\*) in advance of this discussion.

If you have this discussion, you can ask for more information on what is involved in getting tested (e.g. where to go, how to get a home test kit, what to do if it starts to hurt).

You can also ask about 'reasonable adjustments' (e.g. testing in a quiet space; asking for a male or female tester) that might make testing more possible for you.

You can talk about things that you may need to do to help you go through with the test (e.g. listening to music, 'stimming').

You can ask what you need to do if you refuse to be tested (e.g. self-isolating, getting support with your symptoms if you need it).

**If you need to contact [NHS Inform](#) about having Covid-19 symptoms:**

You will probably be advised to get tested if you are showing symptoms. Remember that your *consent* is required before you can be tested. If you think that getting tested will be too distressing for you, you *do not have to get tested*.

You will be expected to be giving consent if you turn up at a testing centre and go ahead with the swab test, or if you request a home testing kit. However even if you manage to get to this stage, if you start to feel distressed you can ask for it to stop (or pull your head back or put your hand up to signal 'stop').

Before the test, you may want to tell the tester that you may need to get them to stop if you get distressed. It may also be useful to discuss what your signs of distress look like so that they can stop if they notice this happening. You can also let them know about things that you may need to do to help relax you (e.g. stimming).

If you do need to get them to stop the test, then you can take some time to decide whether you would like to try again once you feel calmer, or whether you need to leave.

Although getting tested is an essential part of the Test and Protect process, *it is not enforced*.

An advantage of getting tested is that a negative test result means you can stop self-isolating.

It's worth adding that, even if you want a test, you may live too far from a testing centre and a home testing kit may not be available, 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 following a previous difficult experience (e.g. dental or medical)
- Fear of new situations and people
- Having to leave home and travel to a testing centre
- Disruption to familiar routine

If a person is feeling unwell then things like this may feel worse.

A home testing kit, if available, might be an acceptable option and you would be in control of doing it.

*This document was updated on the 12<sup>th</sup> 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](#).*