

DCT FAQs



Test and Trace

Why does my child have to do a test every day for 7 days?

Lateral flow rapid tests are more accurate the more virus that is present. We know that the levels of virus in a person can change from the day of exposure, normally peaking around the onset of symptoms. By testing daily for 7 days we can detect the vast majority of cases.

How is the schools/college clinical trial being monitored?

The trial is being co-ordinated and managed by Department of Health and Social Care, Department of Education, Office of National Statistics and ethics cleared by Public Health England.

It will also be independently evaluated and overseen by an independent data monitoring committee and a trial steering group.

Should my child have an LFD if they previously tested positive?

Twice weekly testing is not needed for 90 days after testing positive. However even people who have recently tested positive need to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone testing positive for coronavirus. Therefore you may opt to do DCT with LFDs rather than self isolate if your school/ college is in the Intervention Group of the study. If you test positive in DCT, you will have to self-isolate for ten days.

How accurate are the LFD tests?

Lateral Flow Tests perform best when levels of virus are at their highest. This means they are particularly useful as a means of finding infections in individuals who do not experience and show any symptoms, but who could still be infectious and pass the virus to others.

Lateral Flow Tests test positive in up to 95% of people with high amounts of virus present.

What is Daily Contact Testing (DCT)?

Daily Contact Testing (DCT) is the regular, daily testing of **close contacts** of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.

What is the benefit of taking part in this trial?

To keep students in face-to-face education for as much time as is possible.

To restrict self-isolation to a primary group of people (positive case) and reduce the impact of self-isolation to a secondary group of people (close contacts).

If I don't want my child to do DCT, what happens?

DCT is not mandatory. If you do not wish your child to do DCT or stop mid-way through, your child will revert to the legal duty to self-isolate for the original 10-day period.

What if my child has an invalid result?

If the test is invalid, the participant is welcome to take another test.

What if I test negative?

If your daily test is negative, it is likely that they are not infectious, and may continue with school/college that day while following the simple guidance of Hands, Face and Space. In the evenings and at the weekend however, they must follow the government guidelines and self-isolate at home.

What if my child tests positive?

If the test is positive, you should assume your child has the virus, self-isolate immediately, and follow government guidelines.

If my child is engaged in DCT, what can my household do?

They should continue about their day as per normal.

If your child tests positive or develop symptoms during the testing regimen, they should start self-isolating in line with government guidance.

How safe is DCT?

In a school-type setting, mass testing for people without symptoms, combined with DCT are shown to be more effective at reducing infections than year-group bubble isolation, according to a publicly available SPI-M (advisory body to the government) paper.

5+ days of testing may closely match the effectiveness of a 10-day quarantine for the same level of adherence. If contacts adhere better to DCT than they would to quarantine, additional transmission may be averted.

Why do LFD tests give 'false positives'?

Antigen lateral flow devices (LFDs) are highly specific, which means that only a small proportion of people who do not have COVID-19 will receive a positive result. Extensive clinical evaluation from Public Health England and the University of Oxford shows that Lateral Flow Tests are appropriate for large-scale population testing, including for those without symptoms.

