

# How to take a nose and throat swab

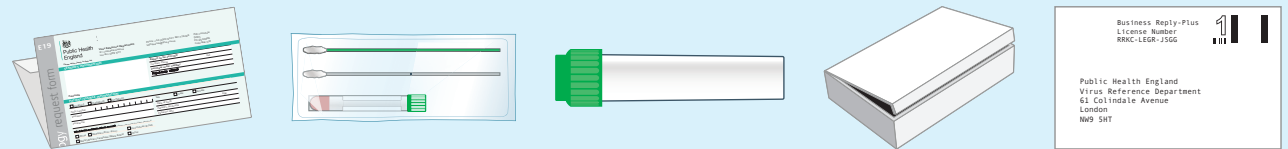
To test for coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) we need two samples – one from the inside of the nose and one from the back of your throat.

Both tests are commonly used by doctors and nurses but you can take both samples safely yourself.

Two nose swabs are OK if you can't manage a throat swab. Swab one nostril with one swab and then the other with the second swab.

The testing kit you have received contains everything you need to take the samples:

- a request form
- two swabs – these are the long cotton buds – one packet also contains a small collection tube containing a pink liquid to preserve any viruses
- a larger green screw top container which is used to transport the samples
- a cardboard box
- a plastic envelope with pre-paid postage.



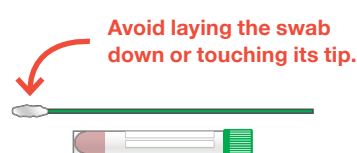
It is very important that you attach the label with your name and date of birth (if there is one) or write this on the small collection tube.

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## Prepare to take the samples

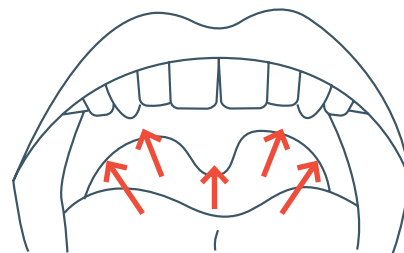
Please wash your hands carefully before you start. Then unpack the kit onto a clean surface.

**A.** First take the throat swab. Open the swab packet which contains the small bottle and pull out one of the swabs.

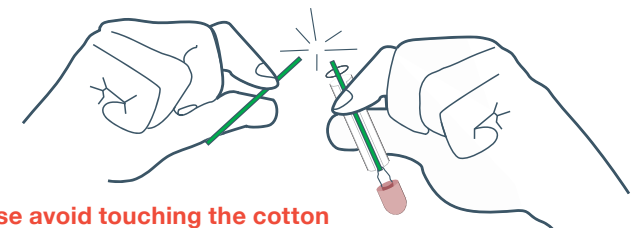


**B.** Wipe the soft tip of the swab around the back of your throat as shown in the diagram. Stand in front of a mirror. Open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue – you will see an arch at the back of your mouth. Try to swipe the soft tip of the swab across the five areas in the picture as below.

Rub the swab several times across the very back of your throat, behind the arch. This may make you gag but should not be painful. Ensure you also swab the sides of the arch where your tonsils protrude. Try to avoid swabbing your tongue and teeth.



**C.** Once you have taken the swab, place the soft tip of the swab into the collection tube and break off the plastic end (at the breaking off point where the swab stick is thinner). Replace the lid on the bottle.

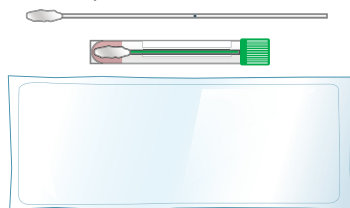


Please avoid touching the cotton bud tip with your hands (before or after the swabbing) to avoid contamination.

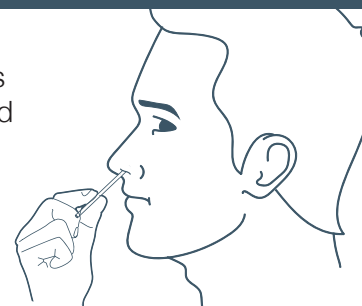
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## Next, take the nose swab

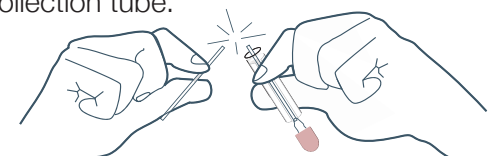
**A.** Pull out the second swab from the packet.



**B.** Place the tip of the cotton bud gently JUST inside one of your nostrils and gently wipe the cotton bud around the inside of your nose. Please repeat this for your other nostril using the same swab. No force is needed and you do not have to push far into your nostril.



**C.** As before, place the swab into the same collection tube (with the other swab) and break off the plastic end. Replace the lid on the collection tube.



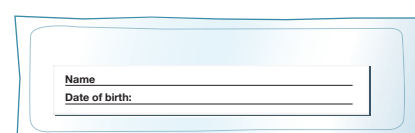
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## Finally, pack and post the samples

**A.** Wash your hands again.

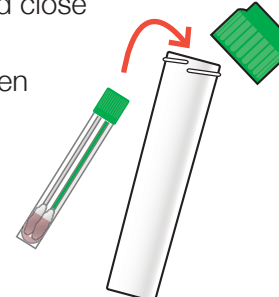


**B.** Write your name, date of birth and today's date on the outside of the small collection tube with the swab. This is very important. Your GP may include sticky labels.

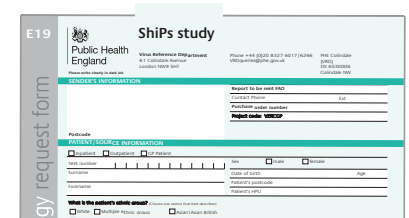


**C.** Place the small tube inside the large green screw topped lid contained and close the lid tightly.

Place the green top container into the cardboard box.



**D.** The form will usually be completed by your GP. Check the details are correct and place the form in the box.



**E.** Place the box into the plastic envelope. Postage has been pre-paid by PHE.

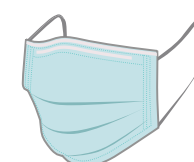


**F.** Post the box back to the laboratory. You can ask a friend, neighbour or family member to drop the pack off at a postbox or post office. Contact them by phone and leave the pack outside your door ready for them to collect. This is so you don't risk passing on the infection.



**H.** If you cannot find someone to help you can go the nearest postbox, ideally wearing a face mask. Return quickly and avoid talking to anyone else while you are out.

Please contact your GP practice (via text, email or phone call) to let them know your swabs are posted.



**Please follow current advice on isolation. The test results will be sent to your GP practice who will contact you to let you know.**

**Please be patient as your swabs are being tested to help monitor disease so will not be tested as a priority.**

**If at any stage your condition worsens, or if you are more worried about your health contact NHS 111 urgently**