

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Covid-19 Testing during a period of Low Prevalence

Version:	1.1
Date of Issue:	06/09/2022
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Precautions:

**Before proceeding to follow the described steps ensure that this is the current SOP and that it has not been superseded.
Ensure that all required equipment and materials are available and that you are familiar with their use before starting.**

On 31st March 2023 the Government provided updated guidance on the testing of elective and emergency admitted patients during periods of low community prevalence of Covid-19 infection. This SOP describes the testing steps to take for 3 categories of patients:

- 1) Emergency admissions – patients admitted through GED. MAU, direct admissions to delivery suite.
- 2) Elective surgical admission (including day cases)
- 3) Admitted patients established in the bed base

In addition, guidance is provided on staff testing

Procedural Steps

Emergency Admissions

Step Task

- 1 Check patient for symptoms of Covid-19 or evidence of immunosuppression (see Appendix 1)
- 2 If patient is symptomatic or immunosuppressed admit to a side room (with ensuite facility) and send a Covid-19 PCR swab to the laboratory.
- 3 If necessary, a Lateral Flow Test (LFT) can be used in ED or MAU to support the safe placement of symptomatic patients
- 4 If the PCR test is positive the patient should remain barrier nursed with droplet precautions in the side room for 5 days or until discharge whichever is the shorter

- 5 If the PCR test is positive inform the infection prevention and control team

Elective Surgical Admissions

Step Task

- 1 The majority of patients attending for planned surgical procedures (including day case) do not require a pre-admission Covid-19 test
- 2 Patients with established immunosuppression (see appendix 1) should be advised at pre-op clinic to undertake a LFT 3 days before and on day of admission.
- 3 If a patient attends for a procedure and has symptoms suggestive of Covid-19 infection a LFT can be performed on site and the result uploaded

Admitted patients established in the bed base

Step Task

- 1 Inpatients who are asymptomatic do not require testing for Covid-19
- 2 Any inpatient who develops symptoms of Covid-19 infection should be moved to a side room with ensuite facilities and a Covid-19 PCR swab should be sent to the laboratory
- 3 If the PCR test is positive the patient should remain barrier nursed with droplet precautions in the side room for 5 days or until discharge whichever is the shorter
- 4 If the PCR test is positive inform the infection prevention and control team

Staff Testing

Step Task

- 1 Staff are not required to undertake LFT or PCR tests for Covid-19
- 2 Staff with symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection who are pyrexial and/or feel too unwell to work should remain at home
- 3 Staff should return to work when they are afebrile and feel well enough to resume
- 4 Staff should follow precautions on PPE, hand hygiene and 'catch it, bin it, kill it' at all times.

Appendix 1

Symptoms of Covid-19 Infection

Main symptoms of COVID-19 include:

fever, a new and continuous cough, anosmia (loss of smell) ageusia (loss of taste)

Other Covid symptoms include:

shortness of breath Fatigue, loss of appetite, myalgia (muscle ache), sore throat, Headache, nasal congestion, runny nose, Diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting.

Immunosuppression

Any patient who has one or more of the following:

- Any haematological malignancy e.g. leukaemia/lymphoma/myeloma
- HIV/AIDS
- Cellular immune deficiencies (e.g. Severe combined immunodeficiency, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome, 22q11 deficiency/DiGeorge syndrome)
- Bone marrow transplant (allogeneic or autologous)
- Solid organ transplant
- Received any chemotherapy or radiotherapy in the past 6 months
- Received immunosuppressive biological therapy (e.g. anti-TNF therapy such as alemtuzumab, ofatumumab and rituximab) in the past 12 months
- Received steroids in the last 3 months - high dose (>40mg prednisolone per day or 2mg/ kg/day in children under 20kg) for more than 1 week OR lower dose corticosteroids (>20mg prednisolone per day or 1mg/kg/day in children under 20kg) for more than 2 weeks
- Received non-biological oral immune modulating drugs e.g. methotrexate >25mg per week, azathioprine >3.0mg/kg/day or 6-mercaptopurine >1.5mg/kg/day

SOP Administration

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Version History

Version	Review Date	Reviewed By	Brief Summary of Main Changes
1.0	01/09/22	Tim Neal	New SOP
1.1	24/03/23	Tim Neal	Yearly review as new document, minor changes to guidance in the step tasks

Intranet Classification

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