COVID-19 Infection Survey

How to take your combined throat and nose swab

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UK Health Security Agency

How to take your combined throat and nose swab

When you get your kit through the post, please do not take your swab sample before your testing window starts.

You should take your swab sample before starting your questionnaire. Please start to take your swab sample when you know you have time to complete the questionnaire afterwards.

A copy of your barcode will be included in your swab test kit. Please keep this as you will need it to answer the questionnaire.

To test for coronavirus, you need to provide a sample from two areas using the same swab.

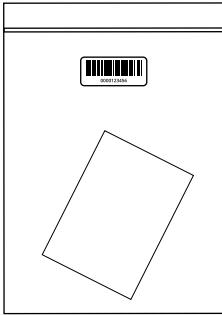1. The back of your throat
2. The inside of your nose (each nostril)

Please ensure you have read all instructions in this guide before you begin.
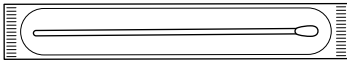
What's in your swab test kit?

Everything you need for performing the test is found inside the swab test kit given to you.
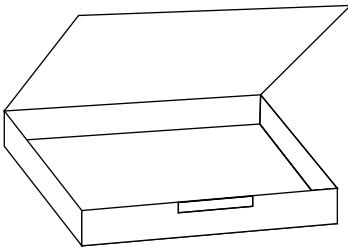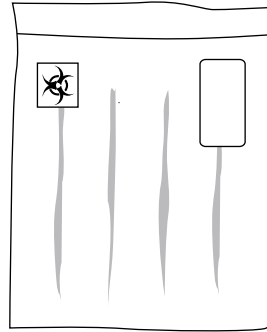
Your swab test kit contents:

1x Re-sealable biohazard bag with an absorbent pad inside **(please do not remove the pad)**

1x Sample return bag with a return label on

1x Swab stick

1x Sample pot with fluid in the bottom and barcode on
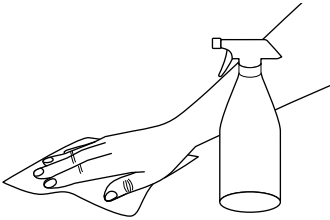

1x Sample box

1x Copy of your barcode. **You will need this to answer the questionnaire.**

The barcodes in your swab test kit are specific to you and to each testing window, **so it is vital that you do not get them mixed up with anybody else's or reuse a kit at a different time.** Your barcode is the only way to track your result back to you.

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If you are taking a blood as well as a swab sample, then there is only one sample box and one sample return bag to send both swab and blood samples back together.

If you have any questions, you can call us for free on 0800 085 6807 or see frequently asked questions at www.ons.gov.uk/cis
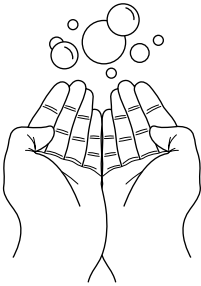
Before you start

1 Clear a table or a similar flat surface from any clutter and clean it to minimise contamination.

- You will use the table to carefully place your materials on, to avoid spilling them.

- Have your household scissors to hand, as you may need them later.

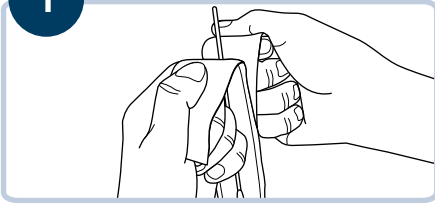**2** Wash your hands with soap and water for around 20 seconds to minimise contamination.

3 Remove the sample pot with fluid in the bottom from the test kit, loosen the lid slightly and carefully place the sample pot on the table.
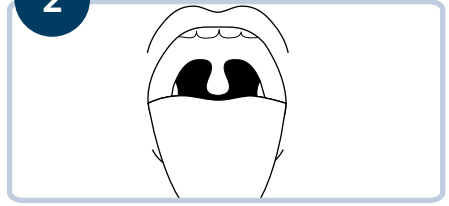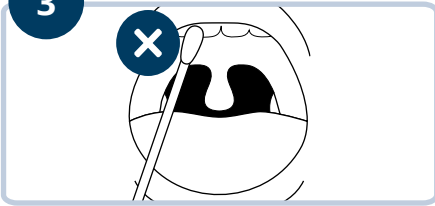
Taking the throat sample

1

Carefully remove the swab stick from its packaging, holding it by the stick end. **Be careful not to touch the tip of the swab with your hands, or let it touch any surfaces.**
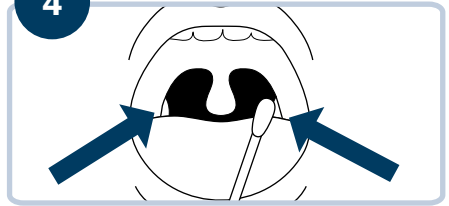
2

Standing in front of a mirror, open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue.

3

Taking care not to let the swab touch your tongue or your teeth, slowly move the swab to the back of your throat.

4

Gently rub the swab several times across the back of your throat, on both sides. **This should not be painful, but it may make you gag.**
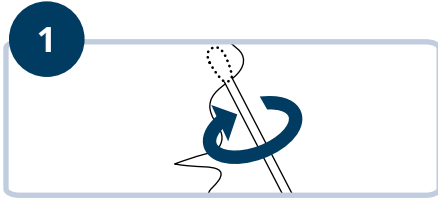
5 Carefully remove the swab from your mouth, again taking care not to let the swab touch your tongue or your teeth.

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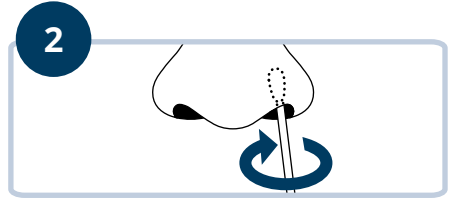
5

Taking the nose sample

To take the nose sample, **you need to use the same swab you used to take your throat sample.**
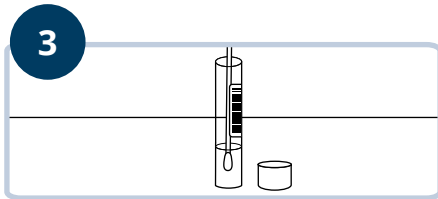
Remember not to touch the tip of the swab with your hands or let it touch any surfaces. **You don't need to use force or push the swab stick far up the nostril.**
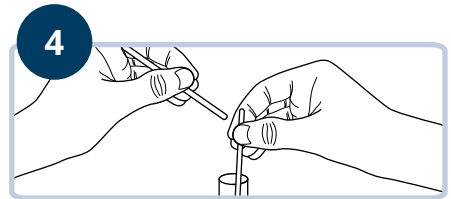
1

Gently insert the swab inside the nostril and rub around the inside of your nose.

2

Remove the swab and repeat in your other nostril.

3
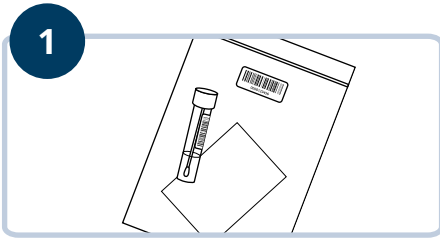
Fully unscrew the loosened lid of the sample pot and place the swab, cotton-bud end first, into the sterile fluid at the bottom of the sample pot.
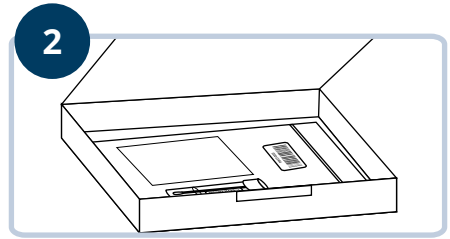
4

While the swab stick is in the sample pot, gently bend the stick end backwards on itself to snap it at its weak spot. **If you are unable to get the stick to snap, you may use household scissors to cut the stick to size instead.**

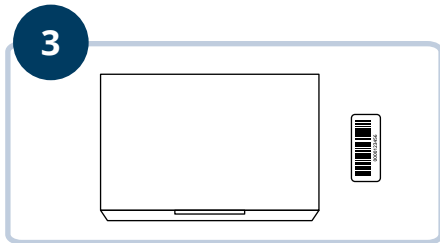**5** Screw the lid securely onto the sample pot.
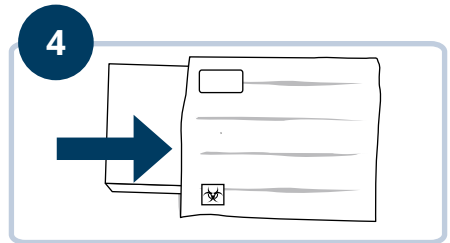
Packing the sample

1

Put the sample pot containing the completed swab test into the biohazard bag with the absorbent pad. Seal the bag.

2

Put the sealed biohazard bag inside the sample box.

3

Make sure you have taken out the loose copy of your barcode. Close the box securely. **If you are taking a blood sample as well as a swab sample, please wait and pack both samples in their separate sealed biohazard bags together in the sample box, before you close the box.**

4

Put the sample box into the sample return bag with the return label on. Seal the sample return bag.

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You should now complete and submit your questionnaire and send your samples back to us.

These instructions are available at **www.ndm.ox.ac.uk/covid-19/ covid-19-infection-survey/ protocol-and-information-sheets** You can request a copy by calling **0800 085 6807.**