

Coronavirus Antibody Testing

29 May 2020

To keep the Coronavirus under surveillance and help us control the disease, the NHS in North East London has started antibody testing; prioritising NHS staff and those working in NHS buildings. Some patients will also be tested when it is clinically appropriate.

- The existing 'swab' test uses a special cotton bud wiping your nose or throat and confirms whether you currently have Coronavirus. It can be done at a test centre or at home.
- The antibody test is a blood test, taken by a qualified person, and tells if you have had the disease.

However, we don't know if a positive antibody test result (indicating you have had the disease) means that you can still pass it on or get re-infected; but it will help us understand how the disease spreads and how we can better manage it in future.

So it is vitally important that even if the antibody test says you have had Coronavirus, you continue following local and Government guidance on self-isolation if you have symptoms, social distancing, correct use of PPE, good hygiene and minimising contact to the best of your ability, to ensure you, your family and friends stay safe and do not get infected.

When more is known about whether having the disease gives you immunity, how long this might last, or whether someone can carry the disease if they have previously been infected, the Government will publish this information.