



29 July 2020 NEWS RELEASE

Got COVID symptoms? Get a test.

Hertfordshire residents urged to help prevent local lockdowns

With life returning to our high streets and lockdown restrictions easing, Hertfordshire residents are being encouraged to do all they can to prevent COVID-19 from resurging in our county. New powers for local councils mean that it is now possible for them to close individual premises, public outdoor spaces and prevent events from taking place if the risks of a significant outbreak increase. However, the continued support of Hertfordshire residents will significantly reduce the likelihood of these measures being introduced. Jim McManus, Director of Public Health for Hertfordshire said:

“Being able to meet with a wider circle of friends and family and visit shops, parks, pubs and hairdressers are every-day freedoms that many of us are able to enjoy again. But we can only do all of these things if we continue to work together and control the spread of coronavirus. If we start to see the number of new cases rising in Hertfordshire, we will be forced to take measures that limit all of our freedoms, in order to save lives.

“We all need to play our part in stamping out the virus. This is the only way to reduce infection in our county. The best way of doing this is to continue social distancing, wash our hands regularly and thoroughly and following the rules and guidance on face coverings. Face coverings must now be worn in shops, supermarkets, shopping centres, banks, building societies and post offices, as well as train and bus stations and airports, on public transport and in NHS health settings.

“If you have any symptoms that could indicate you might have coronavirus, it’s vitally important that you get a test. It’s quicker and easier now than ever before. Remember too that if you’re contacted by the national NHS Test and Trace team, you must follow their advice and self-isolate, to prevent the virus from taking hold in Hertfordshire again and threatening more lives.” Booking a test is quick and easy. The booking site www.gov.uk/coronavirus will show the testing centres available for the next day and you should have your test done as soon as possible after your symptoms first develop. Coronavirus symptoms include a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

Susan from Letchworth works for the NHS and took her daughter to be tested when she developed a cough. Susan said: “My 4 year old woke up with a bit of a cough and it was still there after breakfast. She wasn’t unwell in any other way but I knew that a cough that doesn’t go away could be a symptom of coronavirus, so I went online to book her a test and let her nursery know what was happening. We drove to the test centre at lunchtime and it was very quick. The staff explained what to do by calling my mobile phone and I took a few minutes to

read the instructions in the kit carefully before doing the test. We got her negative result back the next morning and Martha was able to return to nursery as usual.”

Anyone who needs additional help to book a test, or who doesn't have access to the internet, can contact the telephone call centre – phone **119 between 7am and 11pm** or **18001 0300 303 2713** if you have hearing or speech difficulties. The call centre can also answer enquiries about the testing process and what to do once you have your result.

Drive through testing sites are now open to everyone living or working in Hertfordshire – with testing available every day of the week. Results are now returned in less than 24 hours in many cases. People who don't have access to a car or are too ill to drive can order a test kit to be posted to their home.