

**LATERAL FLOW TESTS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Why has this process been introduced at Sherwood Forest Hospitals (SFH)?**

NHS England published updated guidance on 15 April 2021 for ‘*Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic*.’ The document sets out actions which NHS Trusts should take to enable women to receive support from a partner, relative, friend or other person when receiving maternity care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document replaces the previous ‘*Supporting pregnant women using maternity services during the coronavirus pandemic*’ published on 14 December 2020.

One of these actions is to encourage women and their support person to complete the lateral flow tests at home. This will help the Trust to provide safe and personalised maternity care and increase the safety of women, hospital patients, staff and the wider community.

**Who is a support person?**

A support person may be the baby’s father or co-parent or anyone that the woman chooses to support her. Please note this cannot be a child.

**What is the lateral flow test?**

The Innova SARS-CoV2 Antigen Rapid Test (Lateral Flow test) uses a lateral flow device. This is a small cartridge that gives a visual indication of a positive/negative/invalid test. The test uses a swab which has been in contact with the nostril and back of the throat of the person being tested. The swab results are available after 30 minutes.

**Is the test mandatory / voluntary?**

The test is voluntary but women and their support person are being asked to take the test to help keep the hospital safe for other women, their families and staff.

**What if I decline the test?**

 If you decline the test you will still be able to attend for your appointment with all the appropriate infection prevention control measures in place i.e. wearing your mask, maintaining social distancing wherever possible.

**What if my support person declines the test?**

If your support person declines the test they will still be able to attend with you for your appointment with all the appropriate infection prevention measures in place i.e. wearing your mask, maintaining social distancing wherever possible.

**What does the test involve?**

The test involves a swab that is taken from the nose and the back of the throat. The swab is then placed in a liquid and two drops added to the test. It takes 30 minutes for the result. The test kits contain a detailed instruction booklet and everything you need to complete the test at home.

**Is the test and its results recorded anywhere?**

Yes, every test whether positive or negative is recorded via the government database. As detailed in the lateral flow kit instruction booklet you are asked to submit your result online or by telephone and will receive a text message confirming your result. If you are unable to use the online portal or the telephone, there a record sheet in the test kit instruction booklet for you to keep a note of your test results.

**What happens if I or my support partner has a positive test?**

If your support person tests positive they will not be able to accompany you to your appointment. We do not provide a further test for support partners. They will be advised to self-isolate and book a PCR test in line with the current government guidance by calling 119. .

If your test is positive the staff will arrange for you to have a further test (PCR test) to confirm that you are positive. This test involves another swab, this time from your nose and throat. You will need to call the hospital on 01623 676167 to inform them that you have had a positive lateral flow test and you will be offered an appointment to attend for a PCR test and rearrange your scan.

If you test positive an appropriate professional will make an assessment as to the most appropriate time for you to have your scan appointment, which may depend on your current gestation. This may be at a different time on the same day or you may be asked to return on another date. This is so that appropriate infection prevention measures can be put in place to ensure the safety of other patients and staff. Staff will be able to answer any questions/concerns you may have at the time.

**What happens if I or my support person has an invalid test?**

If you or your support person has an invalid test we recommend you take another test if there is time before your appointment