What is the Coronavirus antibody test?

Antibody tests are now being provided free of charge by the Department of Health & Social Care to anyone in paid adult social care employment, whether they have had symptoms or not.

The antibody test is a voluntary blood test and determines whether you have had Coronavirus.

Antibody test results will help to understand the prevalence of the virus across the country and may be helpful in the future if scientific research is released with conclusive findings about immunity.

It is important to note there is currently no evidence to show that someone cannot be re-infected with the virus, or pass it on to others, or have protective immunity. This means anyone with a positive antibody test will need to continue to follow government guidelines, such as social distancing and using PPE.

What antibody tests are there?

Hospital antibody testing

For staff working in care homes you can already access antibody tests through the four hospital trusts that cover North Yorkshire and each has a different approach to the roll-out of anti-body testing across the county.

- York Foundation Trust provide this for Scarborough/Ryedale.
- Bradford & Airedale Trust provide this for Craven.
- Harrogate District Foundation Trust (HDFT) provide this for Harrogate
- South Tees provide this for Hambleton and Richmondshire.

Please note we are still waiting on South Tees to confirm arrangements. As soon as details become available, this information will be shared with staff.

For more information on how to access a test, click: antibody testing through hospital trusts

This antibody test is a blood test that involves taking blood from the arm. If you wish to access anti-body testing, you will need to do this in your own time.

At home antibody testing

All paid care home staff across North Yorkshire are now eligible for at home antibody testing. The test is a 'fingerprick' blood test which checks for coronavirus antibodies. The test kit is posted to you. It comes with everything you need. You take the test and post your sample back. You will then get your results.

To sign up for an antibody test, you will need to register on the online portal here: https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-antibody-test

Is at home antibody testing part of whole home testing?

No. Registered managers are not expected to test all staff for antibodies. If staff wish to access At Home Antibody Testing, they will need to arrange delivery to their home address and do this in their own time.

How do these tests differ from COVID-19 swab tests?

Antibody tests do not replace the COVID-19 swab tests used to determine if people currently have the virus. Swab retesting of all staff and residents should continue as a priority, even if individuals receive a positive antibody test result. Swab tests tell someone if they currently have COVID-19, whereas antibody tests tell someone if they have previously had COVID-19 and have developed antibodies.

You should not change your behaviour based on the results of your antibody test and should follow government guidance, for example on social distancing. A positive antibody result suggests you may have had the virus at some point and have developed antibodies. A negative result does not necessarily mean you haven't been in contact with the virus it just means you haven't developed antibodies.

Further information about antibody testing can be found at
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests/coronavirus-covid-19-antibody-tests