

Call for people with wider COVID-19 symptoms to get tested

Wirral's Director of Public Health is urging residents to get a Covid-19 test if they are showing any of the wider symptoms of the virus.

The three main symptoms of COVID-19 are a high temperature, a persistent cough or a loss of smell or taste. If you experience any of these symptoms you should self-isolate and get tested.

But there is also a wider set of symptoms which people have also been testing positive with.

They include:

- Diarrhoea
- A persistent headache
- Fever and chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

If you have any of these wider symptoms, you should get a test at one of Wirral's symptoms-only testing sites and then self-isolate if your result is positive.

The new advice follows the recent identification of a cluster of cases of the E484K mutation of the virus in the Liverpool City Region.

Julie Webster, Director of Public Health for Wirral, said: "Wirral's infection rates have fallen since we went into lockdown in early January, but they are still high, and we all need to do everything we can to further reduce the numbers and stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

"The virus is constantly changing, and it is important we change with it to adapt our approach and keep people safe. We have found that people may not think they have COVID-19 because they do not have the classic symptoms and so we have widened the set of symptoms eligible for testing at our symptoms-only testing centres. This will help to ensure people are not spreading the virus without knowing.

"We cannot be complacent with our approach to COVID-19 and must do all we can to keep ourselves and each other safe. We must follow the lockdown rules and stay home. If you must leave home follow the guidance, keep your distance, wear a face covering and wash your hands regularly."

Walk-in slots are available at our symptoms-only testing centres in Birkenhead, Bebington, Liscard and Heswall but we recommend you book to guarantee a timeslot at www.wirral.gov.uk/test or by calling 119.

We also have symptoms-only mobile testing by appointment only at:

- West Kirby Concourse on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 February 10am to 3pm
- Europa Leisure Centre on Sunday 7, Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 February 10am to 3pm

Book a symptoms-only test at our mobile testing centres via www.wirral.gov.uk/test

If you test positive at one of our symptoms-only testing centres you must self-isolate for 10 days. You will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace to identify any close contacts who also may need to self-isolate to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Guidance and support on self-isolation can be found here: www.wirral.gov.uk/covidpayment

Further support is also available from Wirral Infobank at: www.wirralinfobank.co.uk

If you are unwell with any of the symptoms of COVID-19 and are due to have your vaccine it is better to wait until you have recovered fully. You should though try to have the vaccine as soon as you are well again. You should not attend a vaccine appointment if you are self-isolating, waiting for a COVID-19 test or unsure if you are fit and well. Protect yourself and others.