

11 September 2020

NEWS RELEASE

Urgent advice for Hertfordshire residents who need a COVID test

People across Hertfordshire are being urged to keep taking precautions against the COVID-19 virus, as the number of local cases increases, and at a time when some people have had problems booking a test.

Health leaders across the county are reminding people what they must do if they or someone in their household develops symptoms that might be COVID-19. The number of people testing positive has increased in the last week across the country, including in Hertfordshire.

Local GP and chair of Herts Valleys CCG Dr Nicolas Small said: “We are worried that after a summer of declining numbers of cases, some people have forgotten that they must stay at home if they or someone they live with has possible COVID-19 symptoms. If you think you might have coronavirus, it is really important that you self-isolate at home and book a test. Things to look for are a high temperature, a new continuous cough or a change in your sense of smell or taste. If you have any one of those symptoms, don’t leave the house at all, book a test and then self-isolate for 10 days or until your test result gives you the all clear.”

Tests can be arranged by visiting www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or by calling 119. In recent days, this service has been busy at times, and some people have had problems booking a test due to capacity issues in the laboratories that process the results. If you don’t have COVID symptoms, please do not book yourself a test. Doing so only makes it harder for people with symptoms to get the test they need.

New testing slots are added hourly, so please keep checking, and self-isolate while you do so. Additional laboratory capacity is being added, but in the meantime, areas of the country where there are significant outbreaks are being prioritised.

People are also required to stay at home if anyone in their household has COVID symptoms, or if they have been told they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive. Anyone living with someone with suspected COVID must not leave the home for any reason for 14 days from the time that their family member or housemate started showing signs of the virus.

It is also essential for people returning from particular countries to self-isolate for 14 days when they get back home, even if they feel completely well. The list of countries this applies to changes regularly.

The latest information can be found at

www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors

Dr Nicolas Small said: “Together we’ve done a good job of reducing cases from the

levels we saw back in April. Now we all have to keep up the good work and prevent a second surge. We all need to play our part to keep ourselves, our families and our communities safe and well. We must keep socially distancing, washing our hands frequently for at least 20 seconds, and wearing a face covering according to the guidance. Anyone who feels unwell should call or go online to 111 for advice rather than going to their GP or hospital.”

The latest information and advice are available at
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>