



**GP approach to dealing with a patient presenting with a report of a
test result for COVID-19 provided by a laboratory other than a
public service laboratory**

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Background

There are an increasing number of providers of laboratory testing for COVID-19 offering testing services to people who live in Ireland. Service providers have those obligations to their customers that apply to any commercial service provider but there is no legal requirement to conform to a specific medical laboratory quality standard or to be accredited to any specific standard.

General Practitioners are not in a position to assess the quality of the laboratory service provided by a service provider and therefore have little practical option other than to accept the test result as presented. Against that background the following is recommended as an approach to how General Practitioners should manage this challenging situation.

Guidance

Report of a positive test result for COVID-19

1. If a patient presents to a GP indicating that they have tested positive for COVID-19 through a laboratory diagnostic service the GP should request the patient to provide a record of the result either as a printed report, email or text message.
2. The GP should note the date the sample was taken, the result and the name of the service provider if available in the patient's record.
3. The GP should attempt to determine if the test was a test for virus (sample taken from the nose, mouth or throat) or test for antibody (almost always a blood test but could be saliva).
4. If the test was an antibody test the patient should be advised that at the moment the HSE does not recommend any particular measures based on the antibody/blood test. The blood test result does not eliminate any public health advice given previously to self-isolate or restrict movements and does not require self-isolation or restricted movements if this was not advised previously.
5. If the test was a test for virus (sample taken from the nose, mouth or throat) and the service provider was any provider other than an acute hospital or

other public service provider, the GP should advise the person to have a repeat test performed through a public service provider.

6. The purpose of the repeat test is to determine if the person meets the [current case definition](#) for notification as a case of COVID-19. Some of the tests provided by providers other than acute hospitals or other public service providers may not be sufficient to fulfil the case definition.
7. The GP should advise the patient to follow guidance on [self-isolation](#) as for a positive case.
8. The GP should advise the patient that all members of the person's household should follow guidance for [household contacts](#) of a confirmed positive case.
9. The GP should continue to advise as per 7 and 8 above even if a repeat sample tested by a public service provider is reported as not-detected.
10. The only exception to point 9 should be if a Consultant Microbiologist or other medically qualified laboratory director is in a position to issue a written opinion that they are satisfied that the original positive test can be discounted on the basis of a review of all relevant laboratory and clinical information.
11. The issue of whether or not a case should be notified to public health depends on the current [case definition](#). This may change over time and may require a specific type of test. This document on how to advise the patient is independent of the criteria for notification in place at a particular time.

Report of a negative/not detected test result for COVID-19

12. If a patient presents to a GP indicating that they have tested negative/not detected for COVID-19 through a laboratory diagnostic service, the GP should request the patient to provide a record of the result either as a printed report, email or text message.
13. The GP should note the date the sample was taken, the result and the name of the service provider if available in the patient's record.
14. If the patient has symptoms compatible with COVID-19, the GP should advise the person to have a repeat test performed through a public service provider.
15. The GP should advise the patient to follow guidance on self-isolation as for a positive case.
The GP should advise the patient that all members of the person's household should follow guidance for household contacts of a confirmed positive case.