



## PRESS RELEASE

15 September 2020

### Feeling unwell? Book a test.

**Family doctors across the Black Country and West Birmingham are urging people to look out for symptoms and use the test and trace service to help the NHS in its fight against COVID-19.**

Anybody who is experiencing any symptoms of the virus should self-isolate straight away, then make an appointment to get a test by calling 119 or visiting [gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)

The symptoms to look out for are:

- A new, continuous cough
- A high temperature
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.

**Dr Anand Rischie, local GP and chair of Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group**, said:

“We’re seeing increasing numbers of people asking for a COVID test, which is a fantastic sign that people are taking public health advice seriously and doing their part to control the virus.

“To help NHS testing be as efficient as possible, we’re asking people to only get tested if you’re having symptoms. If you think you’ve been in contact with somebody who has the virus you must self-isolate, but you don’t need to worry about getting a test unless you develop a cough, a fever or a change to your sense of taste or smell.

“We’d also remind GP patients that you can’t get a COVID test from your local doctor as the testing is only done at specific national sites. But don’t forget that your GP is still here for you if you have any other health worries during this time.”

Because of the numbers of people trying to book a test, it is not always possible to access the national system on the first try. Dr Rischie's advice for anyone this affects is to continue to self-isolate and try again later, as more testing capacity is being added all the time.

Everyone has a role to play in helping stop the spread of Covid-19, by observing the new "Hands, Face, Space" guidance:

- Wash your **hands** thoroughly and often
- Cover your **face** when out in public places
- Make **space** by staying two metres apart where possible.

Since 14 September the new "rule of six" means that no more than six people can meet up at one time, in any indoor or outdoor setting including private homes and gardens.

Some areas, including Sandwell and West Birmingham, have different rules to help control local spread. For the most up to date information about the rules where you live, please visit your local council's website.

**ENDS**

#### **Media enquiries**

Please email [communications.bcwb@nhs.net](mailto:communications.bcwb@nhs.net)

#### **Local authority Covid-19 resources for residents:**

Dudley: <https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/emergencies/coronavirus-advice/>

Sandwell: <https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Walsall: [https://go.walsall.gov.uk/covid-19\\_information](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/covid-19_information)

West Birmingham (Birmingham City Council): [https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/coronavirus\\_advice](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/coronavirus_advice)

Wolverhampton: <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information>