My child has had a test for COVID19. What now?

COVID 19 is a now public health emergency. Parents and children are understandably worried, particularly if they have already had symptoms and been admitted to hospital. While it is true that worldwide it has already caused severe disease and death, the vast majority of people who catch the virus have a mild flu like illness – and many get no symptoms at all. In particular, children seem to get milder disease than adults.

What is COVID19?

COVID19 is caused by a new strain of a family of viruses called coronavirus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world and are frequent causes of the common cold. Occasionally new strains of coronavirus arise which cause more serious disease in some people. COVID-19 is caused by one of these new strains.

What are the symptoms of COVID19?

Most people start with symptoms of a cold, particularly cough and fever. Those who get it more severely can get shortness of breath, or start to breathe more quickly.

What is the treatment?

At present there are no treatments which definitely make a difference to the disease, although there is a lot of research going on. If children need to come into hospital, the treatment is the same as for other virus infections affecting the lungs, such as giving oxygen and help with feeding and breathing.

How do people catch COVID19?

COVID-19 spreads by coughs and sneezes, which produce droplets which other people breathe in if they are within 2 metres of a person who is infected. It also spreads by direct contact, such as touching hands, or something which an infected person has touched or is near them when they cough or sneeze. Touching the face, mouth or nose, after touching something which has been in contact with the virus allows it to get into the airways and lungs.

How long does it take to get the test result?

The laboratories are working as hard as they can, but it takes at least a day, and possibly even longer for the test to be done and the result to come back. We will do everything we can to get the result to you as quickly as possible.

What if the test is positive?

This means that your child has COVID19. While in hospital they will need to be in isolation until their symptoms settle and for at least 7 days. It also means that household members need to continue home isolation for a total of 14 days.

Will my child need to stay in hospital?

Your child will stay in hospital until the doctors are happy that they are fit to go home. There is no specific treatment for COVID so this will usually be when they do not need any of the support we can provide in hospital but you could not give at home. If they go home within 7 days of the start of their symptoms, they will need to continue the isolation until the 7 days have passed.

Most children will recover from COVID19 like any other cough or cold, and the risks of them getting worse again once they go home are small. However, if your child became more unwell, and you felt they needed to be seen again, you should call 111 and NHS24 will put you through to a clinical team. **State that your child is COVID19 positive**. Please do not phone the hospital directly. If your child looked very unwell, particularly if they were very breathless, or blue round the lips, you should call 999.

If your child gets fever and cough again sometime in the next few months, as we know that they have already had COVID they will not need to be isolated again, and household contacts will not need to self-isolate, provided they remain well.

What if the test is negative?

This means that the symptoms for which your child was admitted were not due to COVID19. At present we are not testing for other viruses, so we may not be able to let you know you what it was that caused your child's illness.

If your child has symptoms such as cough, or runny nose, they may have another virus which could spread to others. While in hospital they will need to continue in isolation until their symptoms settle or they go home. After they go home they do not need to continue in isolation after their symptoms have settled. Household members will not need to self-isolate if they were doing so only on the basis of your child's symptoms.

If your child becomes unwell again, and develops a new fever, or a worsening persistent cough, then you will need to start isolating again, and follow the standard guidance

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection

Does the test always work?

Like all tests, they are not 100% accurate, but we can trust a positive result. There are some reasons why we might not get a definite answer from the test. If your child is better by the time we know this, then we would not repeat the test. You should follow the advice given to all the other people who have had symptoms but not been unwell enough to need to come to hospital. If your child is still in hospital, we may do the test again.

What if my child goes home before we get the test result?

Many children will be ready to go home before the result comes back, so you will need to continue in isolation for the 7 days, unless you hear from us that the test was negative. We will phone you or send a text message when we have the result. It may not be a doctor or nurse who lets you know so **make sure that you ask any questions you have to the clinical team before you home.** If it helps, write them down so you remember to ask when they come round.

Please make sure that we have a working phone number for you before you go home.

Where can I find further information?

Don't believe everything you see on line. You can find reliable information on this website:

https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19