

14 May 2021

Dear resident,

Tower Hamlets has one of the lowest Covid-19 testing rates in London and we need your help to change it.

Testing finds Covid-19 cases and stops further spread, because people can self-isolate when they know they are positive. This protects everyone.

With more social restrictions easing from Monday 17 May, more people will be coming into contact with each other, meaning it is important that everyone is taking regular tests - whether they have symptoms or not.

Covid 19 variants

In recent weeks, a small number of Covid-19 variants of concern have been identified in Tower Hamlets. These variants of concern were first identified in Brazil and South Africa.

These variants of concern are not more harmful but may be more easily spread or respond to current vaccines differently.

Testing helps us learn more about these new variants, as well as reduce or even stop their spread.

Take a test

With the easing of restrictions and the small number of variants of concern identified, we are encouraging everyone aged 11 and over in Tower Hamlets to take a Covid-19 test – whether symptomatic or not.

There are two types of testing available– **testing if you have symptoms and testing if you have no symptoms.**

The symptoms of Covid-19 are:

- A new or continuous cough
- A high temperature
- A loss or change in your normal sense of smell or taste

One in three people with Covid-19 do not have symptoms so can pass on the virus without knowing, which is why people taking a test even without symptoms, is important.

More testing sites and how to get a test

We are opening more testing sites for people to get tested or collect home test kits. Some of these are temporary but will help us understand what testing options meet the needs of residents. **All sites offer walk-in testing.**

Additional testing sites if you have no symptoms (opening from Monday 17 May):



- Whitehorse Lane, corner of Mile End Road, London, E1 4LR (opposite Stepney Green tube station)
- Tesco Superstore, Hancock Road, Bow, E3 3DA (left hand car park as enter)
- Bethnal Green Road end of Weavers Field, near Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, E2 6HG
- Chrisp Street Idea Store, East India Dock Road, E14 6BT
- Island Health, 145 East Ferry Road, E14 3BQ (near Asda Superstore)
- South side of Limehouse Station, 244 Ratcliffe Lane, E14 7JE

Existing testing sites can now be accessed whether you have symptoms or not:

- Idea Store Watney Market, 260 Commercial Street, E1 2FB
- Jack Dash House, 2 Lawn House Close, E14 9YQ
- Ecology Pavilion, Grove Road, Bow, E3 5TW

In addition to walk-in testing, you can book an appointment for a Covid-19 test by calling 119 or online www.nhs.uk/coronavirus. Appointments will be given at one of the above existing test sites.

Collection points if no symptoms:

Home test kits for you and your household can be collected from sites across the borough including many pharmacies, shopping centres and community spaces (from Monday 17 May).

A list of places you can collect a home test kit is available online www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/gettested. If you do not have access to the internet, you can call the council's helpline on **020 7364 3030** (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Anyone can also order a home test kit by calling 119 or online www.nhs.uk/coronavirus.

All information on testing options, including any further sites we are working to set up, is available online www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/gettested.

If you have questions or need to talk about support to self-isolate, please contact the council's helpline on 020 7364 3030 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or visit the website www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/coronavirus.

Thank you for playing your part to keep Tower Hamlets safe.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Somen Banerjee
Director of Public Health

Mayor John Biggs