

Introducing rapid Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing in maternity and ultrasonography

Rapid testing for Coronavirus (COVID-19) is being introduced at maternity units run by East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT).

In line with [new national NHS guidance](#), from Wednesday 17 February ESNEFT will be offering rapid Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing to all pregnant people and their support person attending Colchester and Ipswich hospitals, and the Coastal Birthing Unit at Clacton Hospital for:

- 12 week ultrasound scans
- 20 week ultrasound scans
- Accompanying someone in labour
- Fetal medicine appointments
- Visits to the neonatal unit

Giles Thorpe is Chief Nurse for ESNEFT, which runs Colchester and Ipswich hospitals and the Coastal Birthing Unit at Clacton Hospital.

He said: “We know some people infected with Coronavirus (COVID-19) can display no symptoms, known as being asymptomatic. But they can still pass the virus on to others.

“By introducing this rapid testing method, called lateral flow testing, we will be able to identify asymptomatic cases, which will reduce the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in our hospitals.

“Pregnant people and their support partners do not have to be tested, but we are asking for everyone’s help to make this process work so we can keep everyone in our care, and our staff, as safe as possible.”

All expectant parents who are due in for scan appointments will be personally contacted by a member of the team to let them know about the testing process.

Pregnant people and their support person will need to arrive one hour before their scheduled appointment time if they would like to be tested.

The very simple test only takes a few minutes to carry out and our teams should have your result within 30 to 45 minutes.

Pregnant people and their support person will be respectfully asked to leave the maternity unit until they are called with their test result.

Our midwives will be discussing the testing process and arrangements for attending labour with pregnant people and their support person before their baby is born.

[Click here to read more details, including what happens if you or your partner test positive for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\).](#)

When attending appointments and labour, support people are respectfully asked to:

- Maintain a 2 metre distance from staff
- Wear a face mask covering their nose and mouth at all times – support people will be asked to leave the hospital building if they refuse to do so