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→ [Brexit](#) | Check what you need to do

[Home](#) > [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) > [International travel, immigration and repatriation during coronavirus](#)

Guidance

Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing before you travel to England


You must have proof of a negative COVID-19 test to travel to England from abroad.

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 From: [Department for Transport](#)

Applies to: **England** (see guidance for [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), and [Northern Ireland](#))

Contents

- [Take a coronavirus test before you travel to England](#)
- [Test providers and type of test](#)
- [Information that the test result must include](#)
- [Positive test results](#)
- [Exemptions – people who do not need to take a test](#)
- [Passenger locator form](#)
- [Self-isolating when you arrive in the UK](#)
- [Shortening your self-isolation period - Test to Release scheme](#)

 [Print this page](#)

Take a coronavirus test before you travel to England

You must have proof of a negative coronavirus (COVID-19) test to travel to England.

You must take a test even if:

- you're a UK citizen
- you've already had the COVID-19 vaccine

You must take the test in the 3 days before the service on which you will arrive in England departs.

For example, if you travel directly to England on Friday, you must take the test on the Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

[Short video on testing rules](#)

How to provide proof of a negative test result

Your test result can be provided as:

- a printed document
- an email or text message you can show on your phone - make sure your device is charged

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If you do not have proof of a negative test result

If you do not present proof you tested negative, you may not be able to board your transport to England.

If you arrive in England without proof you tested negative, you could be fined £500.

Where to take your test

You can choose to take a test:

- in the place where you start your journey
- in another country on your way to England, if you are travelling through another country

Taking a test on your journey to England

If your journey to England is long, and will involve stopping in another country on the way, you should try to take a test in the country you're travelling through. This is so you take the test in the 3 days before you board the final service to England.

For example, if you're driving from Germany and you stop for a few days in Belgium, you should take a test in Belgium.

If you're travelling by plane and changing flights, where possible you should get a test within 3 days of your final departure point to England.

Check that you will be able to get a test

If you plan to take a test in a country on your way to England, you must make sure that this is possible before you set out. Some [countries have entry restrictions in place](#), which mean you may not be able to get tested there.

If you do not have proof of a test because you planned to get tested on your journey, but you were not able to do so because you were not able to enter the country in which you planned to get tested, you will be allowed to board. But you may be fined £500 on arrival in England because you do not have a valid test result.

If you take your test in the UK

If you take your test in the UK, ahead of a return journey of less than 3 days, you must use a private test provider. You cannot use a National Health Service (NHS) test.

Test providers and type of test

You will need to find a test provider. You must make sure that the test provider can meet the standards for pre-departure testing.

The test must meet performance standards of $\geq 97\%$ specificity, $\geq 80\%$ sensitivity at viral loads above 100,000 copies/ml.

This could include tests such as:

- a nucleic acid test, including a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test or derivative technologies, including loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) tests
- an antigen test, such as a test from a lateral flow device

It's your responsibility to ensure the test meets the minimum standards for sensitivity, specificity and viral load details. You must check with your test provider that it meets those standards.

You may not be able to travel if the test does not meet these standards. It's your responsibility to ensure you get the right test that meets the above requirements.

Where information about providers of tests is available locally, [FCDO travel advice pages](#) will be updated with this information. If you need consular assistance, contact the nearest [consulate, embassy or high commission](#).

Information that the test result must include

Your test result must be in either English, French or Spanish. Translations will not be accepted.

You must provide the original test result certificate. It must include the following information:

- your name, which should match the name on your travel documents
- your date of birth or age
- the result of the test
- the date the test sample was collected or received by the test provider
- the name of the test provider and their contact details
- the name of the test device

If the test result does not include this information you may not be able to board, and may not be able to travel to England. If you arrive without a test result that includes this information, you might have to pay a £500 fine.

Positive test results

If your test result is positive, you must not travel. You must follow [local rules and guidance](#) for positive coronavirus cases.

If the result is inconclusive, you must take another test.

British nationals who need consular assistance should contact the nearest [consulate, embassy or high commission](#).

Exemptions – people who do not need to take a test

Travel from some countries

You do not need to take a test if you began your journey to England from:

- Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man, Jersey or Guernsey
- Ascension, Falkland Islands, St Helena

Children and medical reasons

Children aged under 11 do not need to take a test.

You do not need to take a test if you are travelling to the UK:

- for urgent medical treatment or are accompanying someone who is travelling for urgent medical treatment, and it is not reasonably practical for you to obtain a negative COVID-19 test in the 3 days before departure
- if you have a medical condition which means you cannot take a test – you must present a note from a medical practitioner at check in and to Border Force staff on arrival in England

Exempt jobs

People doing the following jobs do not need to take a test:

- border and customs officials
- channel tunnel system workers
- hauliers
- air, maritime and rail crew
- civil aviation inspectors
- people transporting human cells and blood products
- seamen and masters and inspectors and surveyors of ships
- specialist technical workers - goods and services

Also, in limited circumstances:

- defence personnel, visiting forces and government contractors
- foreign government officials

- UK government officials conducting essential state business, essential government work or essential policing

Read [more details of these job exemptions](#) to see if they apply to you.

Passenger locator form

You must complete a [passenger locator form](#) before you travel to England.

Self-isolating when you arrive in the UK

Even though you have provided a negative test for entering the country, you must follow the [rules for self-isolating](#) when you arrive in England.

All [travel corridors](#) have been suspended.

When you arrive in the UK will need to self-isolate for 10 days, regardless of your pre-departure test result.


Shortening your self-isolation period - Test to Release scheme

You can shorten your self-isolation period if you pay for a COVID-19 test after isolating for 5 days. This is known as the [Test to Release for International Travel scheme](#).

The scheme is not available to anyone who has been in or through [any country that is subject to a travel ban](#) in the 10 days before arrival in England.

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