

The below algorithm should be read in conjunction with official HSE guidance on [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie) / [www.hselibrary.ie](http://www.hselibrary.ie)

## COVID-19 TESTING

Testing for COVID-19 can be **distressing and overwhelming** for many people with dementia.

- Explaining the testing procedure is important;
- This may be more difficult for people with advanced dementia to understand;
- Ensure all practicable steps are taken to enable understanding of the procedure and what it entails.

In Residential Care Facilities staff should be advised to have a **list of residents** who they feel will be unable to take part and may become verbally or physically distressed as a result.

**Note:** In some cases where clinical presentation suggests a diagnosis of COVID-19 and it is not possible to gain consent or where it would be too stressful for the person with dementia, the medical officer may decide not to refer for testing and in such cases a positive diagnosis would be assumed.

### USE of PPE

PPE can be frightening for the person with dementia. They may not understand why the equipment is being worn; they may not recognize staff or pick-up facial and body cues to aid communication.

How you communicate becomes very important:

- Get the person's attention by touching their arm;
- Remain calm, use a reassuring, positive tone of voice;
- If possible establish clear YES-NO signals e.g. thumbs up for yes etc.
- Use other gestures as appropriate;
- If possible have a photo of yourself to hand;
- Use smiley stickers that can be discarded with the equipment.

