



Advisory on Purposive Testing Strategy for COVID-19 in India (Version IX, dated 8th February 2023)

Scope: This advisory on COVID-19 testing strategy is for:

- Early detection of symptomatic cases for quick isolation and care.
- Early detection of infections in elderly (>60yr) and individuals with co-morbidities (diabetes, hypertension, chronic lung or kidney disease, malignancy, obesity, etc.) for quick care.
- To detect & limit the spread of any new Variant of Concern (VoC) and/or Variant of Interest (VoI).

Spectrum of Tests available for COVID-19:

- **Point-of-Care Tests:** Home or Self-Test / Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).
- **Molecular Tests:** rRT-PCR, TrueNat, CBNAAT, CRISPR, RT-LAMP, Rapid Molecular Testing Systems.

Who may be tested:

A. In community settings:

1. Symptomatic (cough, fever, sore throat, loss of taste and/or smell, breathlessness and/or other respiratory symptoms) individuals.
2. At-risk contacts of laboratory confirmed cases.
[At-risk contacts are elderly (>60yr) and individuals with co-morbidity such as diabetes, hypertension, chronic lung or kidney disease, malignancy, obesity, etc.].
3. Clustering of cases/ unusual presentation ([as per the revised surveillance strategy](#)).

B. In Hospital Settings:

4. All SARI cases.
5. 5% of ARI/ILI from OPDs ([as per the revised surveillance strategy](#)).
6. Testing may be undertaken as per discretion of the treating doctor with the following considerations:
 - *No emergency procedure (including surgeries and deliveries) should be delayed for lack of a test.*
 - *Patients should not be referred to other facilities for lack of a testing facility. All arrangements should be made to collect and transfer samples to testing facilities, mapped to the health facility.*
 - *Asymptomatic patients undergoing surgical / non-surgical invasive procedures including*

pregnant women in/near labour who are hospitalized for delivery should not be tested unless warranted or symptoms develop.

- *Admitted patients may not be tested more than once a week.*

C. Testing of International Passengers (Arriving & Departing).

D. A special case scenario- detection of a new VoC or Vol.

People who need not be tested:

1. Asymptomatic individuals in community settings.
2. Contacts of confirmed cases of COVID-19 unless identified as high risk based on age or co-morbidities.
3. Patients who stand discharged as per home isolation guidelines.
4. Patients being discharged from a COVID-19 facility as per revised discharge policy.
5. Individuals undertaking inter-state domestic travel.

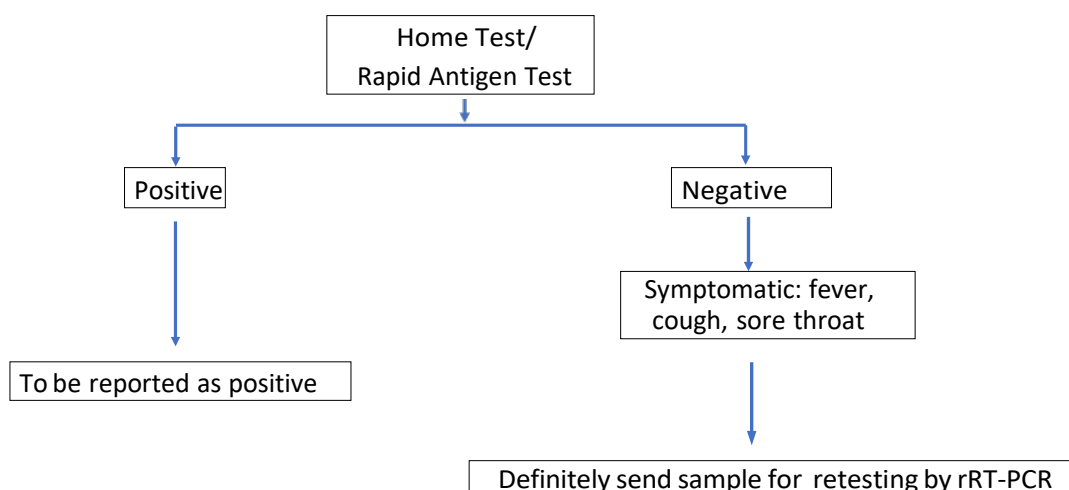
Important points to consider:

- Testing can be undertaken either through rRT-PCR, TrueNat, CBNAAT, CRISPR, RT-LAMP, Rapid Molecular Testing Systems or through Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).
- A positive point-of-care test [Home or Self-test / RAT] and Molecular Test is to be considered confirmatory, without any repeat testing.
- Point-of-care test [Home or Self-test / RAT] should be interpreted as per algorithm at **Annexure**. Symptomatic individuals, testing negative on Home/Self-test or RAT should undertake rRTPCR test as detailed in the algorithm.
- List of approved home tests, RAT and rRTPCR kits are available at the following links:
 - https://www.icmr.gov.in/pdf/covid/kits/COVID_Home_Test_Kit_23112021.pdf
 - https://www.icmr.gov.in/pdf/covid/kits/List_of_rapid_antigen_kits_30122021.pdf
 - https://www.icmr.gov.in/pdf/covid/kits/RT_PCR_Tests_Kits_Evaluation_Summ_23122021.pdf
- Home Testing advisory of ICMR is available at: https://www.icmr.gov.in/pdf/covid/kits/Advisory_Home_Test_kit_19052021_v1.pdf
- All rRTPCR and RAT test results should be uploaded on ICMR portal at: <https://cvstatus.icmr.gov.in>.
- The vaccination status of all individuals tested for COVID-19 must be entered into the Sample Referral Form (SRF) in the RTPCR app both for individuals tested by rRTPCR and RAT. This information is of critical importance.
- Genome Sequencing is done for surveillance purposes and is not required to be undertaken for treatment purposes. Therefore, genome sequencing is to be performed only in a subset of positive samples as per recommendations of INSACOG (Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Surveillance Consortium).
- Individuals who came in contact with known cases of COVID-19, should wait for at least 5 days to get themselves tested for COVID-19.

ICMR's advisory is generic in nature and may be modified as per discretion of the state health authorities for specific public health and epidemiological reasons

Annexure

Algorithm for COVID-19 Test Interpretation Using Home Test/ Rapid Antigen Point-of-Care Test



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- All positive and negative results should be entered into the ICMR portal on a real time basis after performing the test.
 - Results of samples subjected to rRT-PCR should be entered after the rRT-PCR results are available.
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