

## **Recommendation for empiric use of hydroxy-chloroquine for prophylaxis of SARS-CoV-2 infection**

### **Background:**

Hydroxy-chloroquine is found to be effective against coronavirus in laboratory studies and in-vivo studies. Its use in prophylaxis is derived from available evidence of benefit as treatment and supported by pre-clinical data. The following recommendation for the use of hydroxy-chloroquine as a prophylactic agent against SARS-CoV-2 infection is based on these considerations, as well as risk-benefit consideration, under exceptional circumstances that call for the protection of high-risk individuals.

**The National Taskforce for COVID-19 recommends the use of hydroxy-chloroquine for prophylaxis of SARS-CoV-2 infection for selected individuals as follows:**

### **Eligible individuals:**

- Asymptomatic healthcare workers involved in the care of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19
- Asymptomatic household contacts of laboratory confirmed cases

### **Dose:**

- Asymptomatic healthcare workers involved in the care of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19: *400 mg twice a day on Day 1, followed by 400 mg once weekly for next 7 weeks; to be taken with meals*
- Asymptomatic household contacts of laboratory confirmed cases: *400 mg twice a day on Day 1, followed by 400 mg once weekly for next 3 weeks; to be taken with meals*

### **Exclusion/contraindications:**

- The drug is not recommended for prophylaxis in children under 15 years of age.
- The drug is contraindicated in persons with known case of retinopathy, known hypersensitivity to hydroxychloroquine, 4-aminoquinoline compounds

### **Key considerations:**

- The drug has to be given only on the prescription of a registered medical practitioner.
- Advised to consult with a physician for any adverse event or potential drug interaction before initiation of medication
- The prophylactic use of hydroxychloroquine to be coupled with the pharmacovigilance for adverse drug reactions through self-reporting using the Pharmacovigilance Program of India (PvPI) helpline/app.
- If anyone becomes symptomatic while on prophylaxis he/she should immediately contact the health facility, get tested as per national guidelines and follow the standard treatment protocol.
- All asymptomatic contacts of laboratory confirmed cases should remain in home quarantine as per the national guidelines, even if they are on prophylactic therapy.
- Simultaneously, proof of concept and pharmacokinetics studies be taken up expeditiously. Findings from these studies and other new evidence will guide any change in the recommendation.

**Note - It is reiterated that the intake of above medicine should not in still sense of false security. The hydroxy-chloroquine may not be replaced by any other compound.**