



Press Release

ICMR enables more laboratories to test for COVID-19 and revises the criteria for testing

As of today, 72 labs under the Council equipped to test for the virus; 49 additional labs under organizations like CSIR, DBT, DRDO to be activated by end of this week

New Delhi, March 17, 2020: Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the apex health research body of India has activated more laboratories to test for COVID-19 and revised the testing criteria for the same. The Council has equipped 72 of its laboratories to test for the pandemic disease. In addition to these labs 49 more laboratories under organizations like Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), and Defence Research, Development Organisation (DRDO) would be equipped to test for COVID-19 by end of this week. ICMR will also be setting up two testing locations (NCR and Bhubaneswar) for high throughput diagnostic systems for exponentially increasing rapid diagnosing of COVID-19. These systems can test up to 1400 samples in a day.

ICMR is having a dialogue with high-quality private labs that includes labs accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) to understand the modalities of increasing access to the test in the endeavour to prepare for future.

ICMR has also revised the testing criteria for COVID-19 under which an individual should home quarantine themselves for 14 days if they qualify for the following conditions:

1. Direct close physical contact of laboratory confirmed positive case
2. History of travel in last 14 days to high risk COVID-19 affected countries

If the person develops symptoms like fever, cough and difficulty in breathing they should immediately contact the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare helpline for testing. If the person is asymptomatic, they do not require a laboratory test.

In addition to these conditions, if a healthcare worker managing respiratory distress/Severe Acute Respiratory Illness shows symptoms of acute respiratory illness they should get a laboratory test for COVID-19.

If these cases are tested positive, then they should be isolated and treated as per the standard protocols.

Prof (Dr) Balram Bhargava, Secretary, Department of Health Research & Director General, ICMR, said “We at ICMR are regularly monitoring for community transmissions. Our labs are looking at random samples of patients who suffer from influenza like illnesses/ Severe Acute

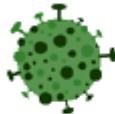
Respiratory Illness for presence of the COVID-19. So far, these results are negative thus implying that India has not reached the stage for community transmissions”



Department of Health Research
Indian Council of Medical Research
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare



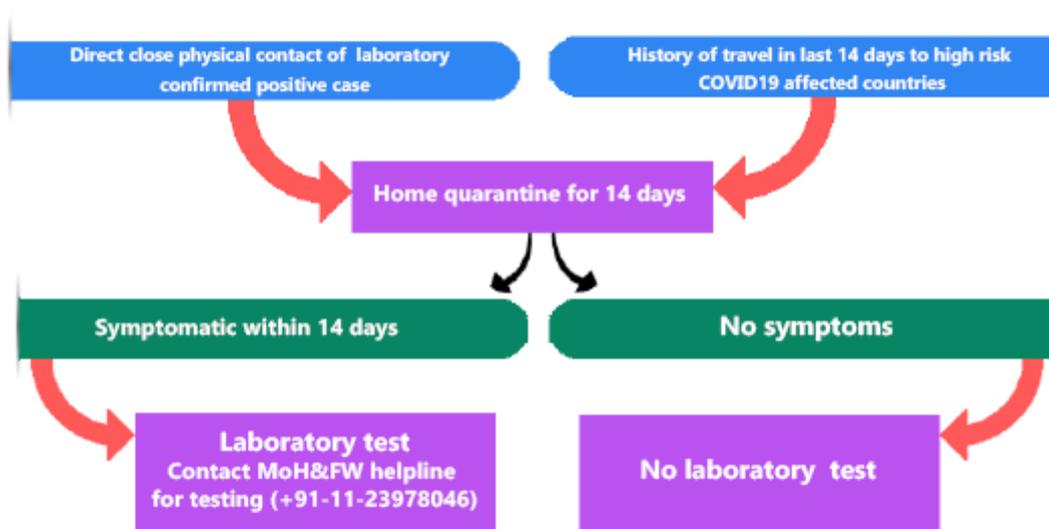
Revised COVID19 Testing Strategy in India: 16/03/2020



- > There is currently no community transmission of COVID19.
- > Disease is primarily reported in individuals with travel history to the affected countries or close contacts of positive cases.
- > Therefore all individuals **need not be tested**



WHOM TO TEST



- > Throat swab + nasal swabs taken in Viral Transport Medium in one tube in cold chain.
- > List of testing facilities: www.icmr.nic.in/content/covid-19
- > Health care workers managing respiratory distress / Severe Acute Respiratory Illness patients should be tested when symptomatic with acute respiratory illness.

***This is an evolving strategy**

About ICMR: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi, the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research, is one of the oldest medical research bodies in the world. ICMR's research agenda align with the National health priorities. These efforts are undertaken with a view to reduce the total burden of disease and to promote health and well-being of the population. ICMR promotes biomedical research in the country through intramural as well as extramural research. Visit us at <http://icmr.gov.in>

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