

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE
NATIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE ON COVID-19
(Updated as on 22.03.2020)**

WHAT IS NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

Novel Coronavirus or COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease that can present itself through varied symptoms such as cough, fever or difficulty in breathing. Infection is spread through droplets generated by coughing and sneezing or through prolonged contact with infected patients.

For definition and more information on COVID-19, visit the World Health Organisation (WHO) website <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

WHO SHOULD GET TESTED FOR COVID-19?

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Department of Health Research (DHR) is the apex body of the Government of India that is responsible for setting the testing strategy for COVID-19 in India.

The testing strategy is reviewed by the National Task Force constituted by Secretary DHR & DG, ICMR and Chaired by Prof. V. K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog. Advisory for testing are being reviewed and updated periodically (09/03/2020, 16/03/2020 and 20/03/2020).

Laboratory test should only be offered when prescribed by a qualified physician as per the ICMR guidelines for COVID-19 testing. Testing is available at Government-designated labs. The test can also be conducted by a private laboratory which has NABL accreditation for real-time PCR assay for RNA virus.

Current Testing Protocol (revised as on 20/03/2020) revised testing protocol dated 21-03-2020 is enclosed. Please check

- i. All asymptomatic individuals who have undertaken international travel in the last 14 days: -
 - a. They should stay in home quarantine for 14 days.
 - b. They should be tested only if they become symptomatic (fever, cough, difficulty in breathing)
 - c. All family members living with a confirmed case should be home quarantined
- ii. All symptomatic contacts of laboratory confirmed cases.

- iii. All symptomatic health care workers.
- iv. All hospitalized patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (fever AND cough and/or shortness of breath).
- v. Asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts of a confirmed case should be tested once between day 5 and day 14 of coming in his/her contact.

Direct and high-risk contact include those who live in the same household with a confirmed case and healthcare workers who examined a confirmed case without adequate protection as per WHO recommendations.

For all queries related to COVID-19, **call the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India's 24x7 toll-free helpline 1075 and 1800-112-545** or the [State Helpline Number](#).

The helpline service will answer the query of the caller and share the contact details of authorities (State Surveillance Officer (SSO), District Surveillance Officer (DSO) or State help line number) through which the caller will get the necessary directions to be followed as per the protocol.

With a view to contain the spread of COVID-19, it has been decided that all the notified National Labs for COVID-19 testing, including Viral Research & Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDLs) and other Labs, spread across the country shall remain open all the 7 days a week.

For more information on testing in India, click on the following links:

1. [ICMR revised strategy for COVID-19 testing in India \(as on 20/03/2020\)](#)
2. [ICMR Guidelines for COVID-19 testing in private laboratories in India](#)
3. [List of COVID-19 Testing Laboratories](#)

WHERE IS THE TREATMENT AVAILABLE?

Confirmed COVID-19 patients who have tested positive by laboratory can get treatment at Government designated hospitals free-of-charge.

Treatment for symptoms such as cough, respiratory distress, severe respiratory illness, etc is available free-of-cost for eligible beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) under various packages such as Acute Febrile Illness, Pneumonia, Severe Pneumonia, Pyrexia of unknown origin, Respiratory failure due to any cause (pneumonia, asthma, COPD, ARDS, foreign body, poisoning, head injury etc.), among others.

It is advised that in case of any of these symptoms present, patients should follow the treatment protocol as set by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.

OFFICIAL WEBSITES FOR ALL DETAILS ON COVID-19

All detailed information, guidelines and updates on COVID-19 are available on the below official websites:

1. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India - <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>
2. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - <https://icmr.nic.in/node/39071>
3. World Health Organisation (WHO) - <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>
4. 24x7 toll-free COVID-19 helpline no. 1075 and 1800-112-545

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

In the wake of the prevailing COVID-19 situation and in order to strengthen the containment measures, it is of utmost importance that each and every case (suspects/confirmed) of COVID-19 is isolated and provided appropriate treatment and their contacts are traced at the earliest to break the chain of transmission. It is important that support and cooperation of private sector is enlisted, in this regard.

It is mandatory for all hospitals (Government and Private), Medical officers in Government health institutions and registered Private Medical Practitioners including AYUSH Practitioners, to notify such person(s) with COVID-19 affected person (as defined in the attached annexure) to concerned district surveillance unit.

All practitioners shall also get the self-declaration forms (enclosed), who, within their knowledge, are having travel history of COVID-19 affected countries as per the extant guidelines and are falling under the case definition of COVID-19 (Suspect/Case).

In case the person has any such history in the last 14 days and is symptomatic as per case definition of COVID-19, the person must be isolated in the hospital and should be tested for COVID-19 as per protocol.

Information of all such cases should be given to the State helpline number (list can be accessed [here](#)) and also to national helpline 1075 and 1800-112-545. Email may also be sent at ncov2019@gov.in .

All guidelines and updates on COVID-19 pertaining to hospitals and medical educational institutions are available on the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, website https://www.mohfw.gov.in/for_hospitals.html .
