



सत्यमेव जयते

**प्रोफेसर (डा.) बलराम भार्गव**, पदम श्री

एमडी, डीएम, एफआरसीपी (जी.), एफआरसीपी (ई.), एफएसीसी,  
एफएएचए, एफएएमएस, एफएनएस, एफएएससी, एफ.एन.ए., डी.एस.सी.

**सचिव, भारत सरकार**

स्वास्थ्य अनुसंधान विभाग

स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय एवं

महानिदेशक, आई सी एम आर

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**भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान अनुसंधान परिषद**

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Dated: 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020

**Addl.Chief Secretaery/Secretary/Principal Secretary Health (All States)**

**Sub: Protocol for using 'Rapid antibody test' in Hot area – epidemiological studies and surveillance**

I am writing to you with reference to the rapid antibody test kits for COVID-19 testing. It is understood that many States intend to use these kits in affected areas.

2. The National Task Force at ICMR has carefully reviewed the data evolving from various countries on use of such kits. Based on available evidence, the testing strategy for COVID-19 has been revised further. The revised document is enclosed for your reference.

3. It is critical to understand the following key facts while using the rapid antibody tests:

- Gold standard frontline test for COVID-19 diagnosis is **real time PCR based molecular test**, which is aimed at early virus detection.
- The rapid antibody test cannot replace the frontline test.
- The rapid Antibody test is a **supplementary tool** to assess the prevalence of the diseases within a specific area / perimeter.
- The rapid antibody test will **only be of utility after a minimum of 7 days of onset of symptoms**.
- Data about these rapid tests is emerging and understanding of their utility for diagnosis is still evolving.
- The rapid tests are useful for **epidemiological studies and surveillance purposes**.
- **THE TEST HAS TO BE DONE UNDER STRICT MEDICAL SUPERVISION.**

4. The enclosed ICMR advisory is for Hot spots. In case your state does not have a Hot spot, these tests may be used for:-

- a) Any hotspot which may emerge in future
- OR
- b) As a surveillance tool for epidemiological purposes in such areas where cases have not emerged so far.

5. Before starting the rapid test, it should be registered on covid19cc.nic.in/ICMR and data related to the test should be reported on the same.

With best regards

Yours sincerely

*Balram Bhargava*  
( Balram Bhargava )

Enclosed: As above

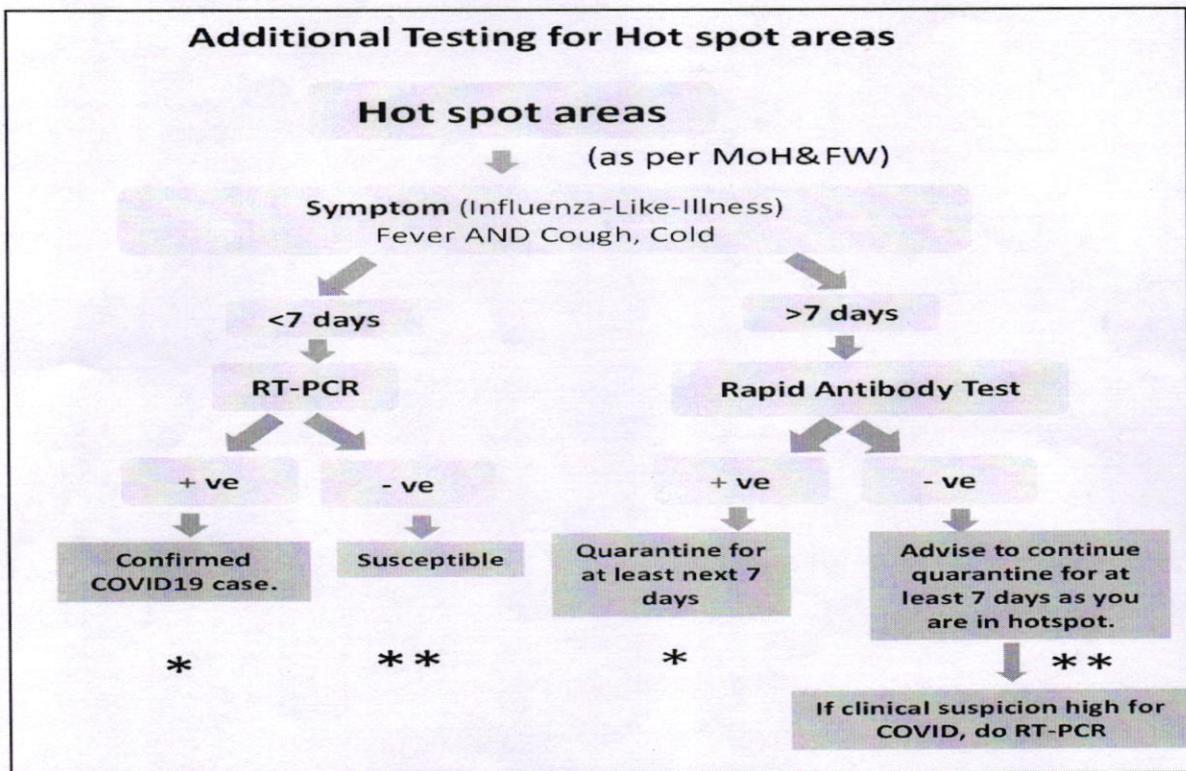
CC: Chief Secretary/Administrators

**A. COVID-19 Testing Strategy for India (Recommended for the entire country)**

Real-Time PCR (RT-PCR) test and Point-of-Care molecular diagnostic assays are recommended for diagnosis of COVID-19 among individuals belonging to the following categories:

- All symptomatic individuals who have undertaken international travel in the last 14 days
- All symptomatic contacts of laboratory confirmed cases
- All symptomatic health care workers
- All patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (fever AND cough and/or shortness of breath)
- 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

**B. Additional (in addition to A) Testing recommended in hot spots**



- \* Refer to Hospital if symptoms appear / worsen
- \*\* Follow precautions, social distancing, use masks, frequent hand washing, avoid unnecessary travel)

*Balwan Dargan*