



COVID-19 (nCorona) Virus Outbreak Control and Prevention State Cell

Health & Family Welfare Department

Government of Kerala

OPTIMIZATION OF COVID-19 TESTING STRATEGY IN THE SECOND WAVE OF THE PANDEMIC

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In order to optimize the testing strategy during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic the following guidelines are issued with reference to the guidelines issued by ICMR¹.

1. Considering the ease of testing and advantage of quick detection of cases, Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) are to be scaled up to contain the surge and enable access to the testing facilities for the general public:
 - a. Setting up of RAT booths should be focused on urban slums, coastal areas, rural areas, underserved areas, transit stations or even attached to health facilities.
 - b. RAT testing booths shall have adequate infection control systems for prevention of infections. Biomedical waste disposal shall be appropriately handled.
 - c. Queuing shall be avoided in front of booths.
 - d. Staff on duty in the booths shall be trained in infection prevention measures, testing procedures and biomedical waste management.
 - e. Booths with expected high utilization (transit sites; railway, interstate bus stations and urban areas) may be set up to run 24 x 7 with adequate security measures.
 - f. Drive through swabbing facility may be set up near the booth to ensure minimum mobility of the patients from their transport vehicle.
 - g. RAT shall be performed according to the testing guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Family Welfare govt of Kerala- <https://dhs.kerala.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Guideline-Testing-Feb-2021.pdf>
 - h. Test reports shall be entered on the LDMS portal (<https://labsys.health.kerala.gov.in/>) on a real time basis. LDMS portal is a web enabled platform for such purposes. Institutions already approved for RAT testing in Kerala state do not require additional permission for the same. The name and location of

the booth should be mentioned in the “**remarks section**” during data entry.

2. RTPCR test must not be repeated in any individual who has tested positive once either by Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) or RTPCR
3. COVID test is not required for COVID recovered individuals at the time of hospital discharge. For discharge guidelines refer to the guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Family Welfare govt of Kerala. <https://dhs.kerala.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Guidelines-Discharge-Policy-April-2021-1.pdf>
4. RTPCR testing is also to be augmented using mobile laboratories.


Principal Secretary

References:

1. https://www.icmr.gov.in/pdf/covid/strategy/Advisory_COVID_Testing_in_Second_Wave_04052021.pdf
2. <https://dhs.kerala.gov.in>