

SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS, AT RISK AND CONTACTS IN TAMIL NADU TO BE TESTED BY RT-PCR ONLY

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The Directorate of Public Health has instructed all Deputy Directors of Health Services to adhere to the RT-PCR testing strategy without deviation. File | Photo Credit: The Hindu

Symptomatic individuals should be tested for COVID-19 by RT-PCR only, the Directorate of Public Health (DPH) and Preventive Medicine has said.

Also, at-risk contacts of the laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and contacts of clustering of cases /unusual presentations in the community setting and all hospitalised cases of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) should also be tested by RT-PCR only.

In the light of a surge in the COVID-19 cases in a few countries and neighbouring States as well as the identification of the latest variant — JN.1 — in four samples in Tamil Nadu, the DPH issued an advisory on a purposive testing strategy.

The directorate instructed all Deputy Directors of Health Services to adhere to the guidelines without deviation. It said that the following persons should be tested for COVID-19 by RT-PCR only: in community setting, symptomatic individuals — those having cough, fever, sore throat, breathlessness and/or other respiratory symptoms; at-risk contacts of laboratory-confirmed cases (at-risk contacts are elderly and individuals with co-morbidity such as diabetes, hypertension, chronic lung or kidney diseases, malignancy, immunocompromised, obesity); and contacts of clustering of cases/unusual presentation, and in hospital settings, all hospitalised ILI and all SARI cases.

This is to facilitate early detection of symptomatic cases for immediate care, early detection of infection in elderly (aged above 60 years), and individuals with co-morbidities for immediate care and to limit the spread of the new isolated variant of interest — JN.1.

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