

Guideline for Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Testing (Ag-RDT) for de-isolation of COVID 19 positives

The clinical performance of rapid antigen diagnostic tests largely depends on the circumstances in which they are used. SARS-CoV-2 Rapid antigen tests (Ag-RDT) perform best when the person is tested in the early stages of infection with SARS-CoV-2 when viral load is generally highest. Antigen-detecting diagnostic tests are designed to directly identify SARS-CoV-2 proteins produced by replicating virus in respiratory secretions and have been developed as both laboratory-based tests and rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) intended for near-patient use.

This guideline is for using SARS-CoV-2 Rapid antigen tests (Ag-RDT) for the purpose of de-isolating COVID 19 cases. Ag-RDT test for de-isolation should only be performed after an assessment of COVID 19 positive case. Ag-RDT test should not be performed if the person is symptomatic.

General recommendations:

1. Ag-RDT testing is recommended to be performed only on symptomatic persons, within the first 7 days of symptoms onset (when the viral load is high), in a community transmission setting. In such a setting, if the test result is positive this should be counted as a valid result.
2. The Ag-RDT should be performed by registered health professionals in the Maldives, in a health facility that has been approved by Quality Assurance Regulation Division, Ministry of Health to conduct SARS-Cov2 Antigen testing, and under strict infection control and prevention measures.
3. The SARS-CoV-2 Ag-RDT test should have > 90 % sensitivity and > 97% specificity.
4. The Ag-RDT test should be one that has Emergency Use Authorization of US FDA or included in the Emergency Use Listing of WHO.
5. It is mandatory to enter all results of Ag-RDT test done in the country (positive / negative,) to the national surveillance system at Health Protection Agency.
 - Existing PCR testing laboratories with access to national surveillance system should enter results immediately to system.
 - Any other institution with approval to do Ag-RDT testing should have a registered email address at MoH and send the result immediately to heoc.pcr@health.gov.mv
6. De- isolation of any positive case after a negative Ag-RDT test should follow the most recent COVID-19 treatment guideline and sop for de-isolation.



7. Health care settings and other providing Ag-RDT test should establish a separate pathway for those COVID-19 positive who are coming to take release samples.
8. Adhere to national infection and prevention control guidelines and follow procedures as per quick reference SOP for COVID-19 versions 11. (**Always refer to most recent guideline for any new updates*)
9. Adhere and follow procedures as per quick reference SOP for COVID-19 versions 11 on waste management. (**Always refer to most recent guideline for any new updates*)

