World Health Organization

# When capacity is limited, who should be tested for SARS-CoV-2?

| Prioritization | Population Groups |
|---|---|
| **Strongly recommend to test*.** | • Symptomatic health or care worker with no known COVID-19 contact<br>• Individual meeting case definition for COVID-19, requiring admission to health care facility |
| **Recommend to test*.**<br>If testing is not available, register as a suspected case and isolate. | • Symptomatic health or care worker identified as a contact<br>• Individual meeting case definition for COVID-19 with mild disease without underlying health conditions. |
| **Test* a subset of the cases.**<br>Consider all other symptomatic individuals as probable cases and isolate. | • Increased number of suspected cases in a specific group (potential cluster)<br>• Symptomatic individuals in closed settings, including schools, hospitals and long-term living facilities |
| **Testing* is lowest priority / not required.** | • Asymptomatic contacts of confirmed or probable cases<br>• Recovering patients<br>• Other asymptomatic individuals |

*Testing can be done using nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) or Ag-RDTs. NAAT is the reference standard but Ag-RDTs are a crucial tool used to increase access to testing. Depending on the epidemiological context, Ag-RDTs may be used by professionals or individuals (using self-tests) to test for SARS-CoV-2 without the need to confirm the result using NAAT.

**WHO isolation recommendations:**
**https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/criteria-for-releasing-covid-19-patients-from-isolation**
**WHO considerations for quarantine of contacts: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-IHR-Quarantine-2021.1**

*For more information see WHO guidance June 2021: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-lab-testing-2021.1-eng, Oct 2021: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/antigen-detection-in-the-diagnosis-of-sars-cov-2infection-using-rapid-immunoassays and March 2022 https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Ag-RDTs-Self_testing-2022.1*