

Revised Guidelines for testing of persons with flu like symptoms reporting at hospitals notified for influenza H1N1

So far, the present guidelines stipulate that a person suspected of influenza A H1N1 need to be referred to an identified govt. health facility. He/she needs to be kept in an isolation facility in that hospital and if found positive, is treated accordingly.

In order to make the testing facility for H1N1 more accessible at large and due to the onset of the Influenza season in the country, it has been decided to revise the existing guidelines.

Under the new guidelines, any person with flu like symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, cold, running nose etc. should go to a designated Government facility for giving his/her sample for testing for the H1N1 virus. After clinical assessment, the designated medical officer would decide on the need for testing. Except for cases that are severe, the patient would be allowed to go home (This was not allowed under the existing guidelines).

The sample of the suspect case would be collected and sent to the notified laboratory for testing. If tested as positive for H1N1 and in case the symptoms are mild, the patient would be informed and given the option of admission into the hospital or isolation and treatment at his own home.

In case the patient opts for home isolation and treatment, he/she would be provided with detailed guidelines / safety measures to be strictly adhered to by the entire household of the patient. He/ she would have to provide full contact details of his entire household. The household and social contacts would be provided with the preventive treatment.

Notwithstanding the above guidelines, the decision of the doctor of the notified hospital about admitting the patient would be final.

In case the test is negative, the patient will accordingly be informed.

These guidelines have been issued by the Government in public interest and shall be reviewed from time to time depending on the spread of the pandemic and its severity in the country. These guidelines would however not apply to passengers who are identified through screening at the points of entry. The existing policy of isolating passengers with flu like symptoms would continue.