

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Revised Discharge Policy, dated 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2020**

A revised discharge policy for COVID-19 cases was issued by MoHFW on 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2020. (Available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/ReviseddischargePolicyforCOVID19.pdf>). The policy was prepared in consultation with ICMR and is in line with the MoHFW's guidelines on the categorization of the patients based on clinical severity and their management in the 3 tier COVID facilities (Available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/FinalGuidanceonMangaementofCovidcasesversion2.pdf>).

### **FAQs**

#### **1. What was earlier criteria for discharging COVID-19 patients**

The earlier criteria for discharging RT-PCR positive were (a) chest radiograph has cleared and (b) two consecutive negative test results on RT-PCR.

#### **2. What is the new discharge policy for COVID-19 patients?**

##### For mild/very mild/pre-symptomatic cases

- Patient can be discharged after 10 days of symptom onset and no fever for 3 days
- No need for testing prior to discharge
- Patient will be advised to isolate himself/herself at home & self-monitor his/her health for further 7 days

##### For moderate cases

- Patient can be discharged (a) if asymptomatic for 3 days and (b) after 10 days of symptom onset
- No need for testing prior to discharge
- Patient will be advised to isolate himself/herself at home & self-monitor his/her health for further 7 days

##### For severe cases

- Clinical recovery
- Patient tested negative once by RT-PCR (after resolution of symptoms)

#### **3. Why was the discharge policy changed?**

Several countries have changed the criteria for discharge from 'test based strategy to 'symptom based strategy' or 'time based 'strategy. A review of ICMR laboratory surveillance data also indicated that after initial RT-PCR positive results, patients became negative after a median duration of 10 days. Recent studies have also suggested that the viral load peaks in the pre-symptomatic period (2 days before symptoms) and goes down over the next 7 days.

#### **4. How then it will be established that a patient is cured of the disease?**

Being cured of a disease may have different connotations for general public, treating doctors and the virologists. Unless there is a fear of resurgence of infection and subsequent transmissibility of an infection, resolution of clinical manifestation is usually taken as an evidence for cure.

**5. Is there a risk of transmission from patients discharged based on the revised criteria?**

Available evidence does not indicate any increase in the risk of transmission from patients discharged based on the revised discharge criteria. The revised criterion also specifies that such patient will be advised to isolate himself/herself at home & self-monitor his/her health for further 7 days.

**6. What precautions the patient should undertake during home isolation?**

Such patients should at all times use triple layer medical mask. Patient must stay in the identified room and away from other people in home, especially elderly and those with co-morbid conditions like hypertension, cardiovascular disease, renal disease etc. They should maintain strict personal hygiene and self-monitor his/her health with daily temperature monitoring and report promptly if develops any deterioration of symptom.

**7. Is there a need to get tested after the home isolation period is over?**

No. As per the latest revised discharge policy, there is no need for testing prior to discharge all pre-symptomatic/very mild/mild confirmed cases of COVID-19 after 10 days of symptom onset and no fever for 3 days. Therefore, it stands to reason, that no testing is also needed for patients undergoing home isolation (pre-symptomatic/very mild/mild confirmed cases) after the home isolation period is over.

**8. What does the current discharge policy mean for patients who are being home isolated?**

As detailed above, as far as testing is concerned, there is no need for testing after the home isolation period is over. However, (as the current discharge policy advises that patients isolate themselves at home & self-monitor their health for further 7 days after discharge), the period of home isolation would end after 17 (10+7) days of symptom onset and no fever for 10 (3+7) days.

**9. Does this policy apply to those undergoing home or facility quarantine?**

Discharge policy is meant for patients (symptomatic/pre-symptomatic) diagnosed (using RT-PCR testing) to be suffering from COVID-19. Quarantine (home or facility) is meant for asymptomatic/healthy persons who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 infection but are not manifesting any symptoms. Therefore, there is no question of discharge of such persons. However, their stay under quarantine period will remain 14 days from the date of last exposure.