WHO COVID-19: Case Definitions

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World Health Organization | Case Definitions

Suspected case of SARS-CoV-2 infection (3 options)

A A person who meets the clinical **OR** epidemiological criteria:

Clinical criteria:

- acute onset of fever AND cough (ILI)

OR

- acute onset of **ANY THREE OR MORE** of the following signs or symptoms: fever, cough, general weakness/fatigue[1], headache, myalgia, sore throat, coryza, dyspnoea, nausea/diarrhoea/anorexia

OR

Epidemiological criteria [2]:

- contact of a probable or confirmed case, or linked to a **COVID-19 cluster.**[3]

B A patient with **severe acute respiratory illness**
(SARI: acute respiratory infection with history of fever or measured fever of ≥38 °C; and cough; with onset within the last 10 days; and requires hospitalization)

C A person
with no clinical signs or symptoms **OR** meeting epidemiologic criteria
with a **positive professional-use or self-test** SARS-CoV-2 Antigen-RDT.[4]

[1] Signs separated with slash (/) are to be counted as one sign.

[2] **In light of the heightened transmissibility of emerging variants and the high likelihood that any close contact could be infected, epidemiological criteria alone are included in order to qualify asymptomatic contacts for testing, when possible, for the countries with the capacity to adapt more sensitive testing strategies; this is particularly relevant in high-risk populations and settings.**

[3] A group of symptomatic individuals linked by time, geographic location and common exposures, containing at least **one NAAT-confirmed** case or at least **two** epidemiologically linked, symptomatic (meeting clinical criteria of Suspect case definition A or B) persons with **positive professional use OR self-test Ag-RDT** (based on ≥97% specificity of test and desired >99.9% probability of at least one positive result being a true positive)

Probable case of SARS-CoV-2 infection (2 options)

A A patient who meets **clinical criteria AND** is a **contact of a probable or confirmed case**, or linked to a **COVID-19 cluster**[3]

B **Death**, not otherwise explained, in an adult with **respiratory distress** precedi
death AND who **was a contact of a probable or confirmed case** or linked to
COVID-19 cluster[3]

Confirmed case of SARS-CoV-2 infection (2 options)

A A person with a positive **Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT), regardless of** clinical criteria **OR** epidemiological criteria

B A person
meeting clinical criteria **AND/OR** epidemiological criteria (suspect c
with a **positive professional-use or self- test** SARS-CoV-2 Antigen-RI

[4] Ag RDT antigen-detection rapid diagnostic tests (Ag-RDT) are available for use by trained professionals or for self-testing by individuals:

- **Professional-use SARS-CoV-2 antigen-RDT :** WHO EUL-approved Ag-RDT, in which sample collection, test performance and result interpretation are done by a trained operator

- **Self-test SARS-CoV-2 antigen-RDT :** WHO EUL-approved Ag-RDT in which sample collection, test performance and result interpretation are done by individuals by themselves.

Note: Clinical and public health judgment should be used to determine the need for further investigation in patients who do not strictly meet the clinical or epidemiological criteria. Surveillance case definitions should not be used as the sole basis for guiding clinical management.

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W mber: WHO/2019-nCoV/Surveillance_Case_Definition/2022.1

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