

# ICMR STARTS REVISING CURRENT NATIONAL ESSENTIAL DIAGNOSTICS LIST FOR FIRST TIME

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The Indian Council of Medical Research. Photo: [icmr.gov.in](http://icmr.gov.in)

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has begun the process of revising the current National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL), saying that considerable time has passed since the [first such list was released in 2019](#). The Council has invited relevant stakeholders to offer suggestions on adding or deleting diagnostic tests to the current list by the end of February.

The NEDL lists the essential and most basic tests that should be available at various levels of healthcare facilities in the country, including at the village level, in sub-health centres, health and wellness centres, and primary health centres.

In 2018, the World Health Organisation had recommended the development and implementation of an NEDL to facilitate the availability of in-vitro diagnostics across the various tiers of the healthcare pyramid, in facilities with or without an onsite laboratory. ICMR then released India's first NEDL in 2019 to make the availability of diagnostics an essential component of the healthcare system.

"The inclusion of diagnostic tests in the NEDL was based on careful consideration of the disease burden data across different States of India, alignment with national programs and adherence to Indian public health standards. The required manpower, infrastructure and logistical support required at each health facility to carry out the tests were also recommended," the Council noted.

ICMR has now asked stakeholders to consider factors such as how essential a test is, the disease burden, and the alignment with Indian public health standards before proposing any additional tests to the existing list. It defined essential diagnostic tests as those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population and are selected with due regard to disease prevalence and public health relevance, evidence of efficacy and accuracy, and comparative cost-effectiveness.

The Council added that the test should focus on conditions with a high disease burden or having significant public health relevance, where the introduction of a diagnostic test will have a clear impact on disease diagnosis and management. It should have a documented use and necessity at the level for which it is suggested, and any proposed addition should align with the availability

of equipment, infrastructure and manpower, as per the Indian Public Health Standards, 2022.

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