

## Karnataka govt urges districts to increase surveillance amid Omicron surge

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BENGALURU : The Karnataka government on Wednesday has asked district authorities and health officials to enhance surveillance in the state amid increasing Omicron cases .

The circular also urged district officials and health officers to designate contact tracers and quarantine observers to curb the spread as 19 Omicron cases were detected in the State.

In a circular issued to the district and health officials, principal secretary, health and family welfare, T K Anil Kumar said 19 cases of super spreader Omicron variant have been detected and "if left unchecked, may trigger a spike in number of new infections."

"To sustain the gains achieved so far in surveillance, containment efforts and to make best efforts to prevent occurrence of the third wave of Covid infections in the State, it is necessary to trace, track and quarantine the primary and secondary contacts of Covid-19 positive persons, more effectively," Kumar said in his circular.

He said the primary and secondary contacts should be identified within 24 hours of reporting of Covid positive case.

The primary contacts should be tested on the first day and again on the eighth day and home quarantined for seven days from the date of Covid positive reporting.

Similarly the international travelers from high risk countries need to be quarantined for seven days from the date of their arrival, until the follow-up and repeat RT-PCR test on the eighth day, according to the circular.

He added that once the primary and secondary contacts also test positive, they should be treated and managed as per the Covid protocol. Regarding surveillance, he said Health care personnel such as Public Health Inspecting Officers (PHIO), Community Health Officers (CHOs) and ASHA workers or such other persons who are doing these activities of contact tracing, quarantine and home isolation watch should continue to do them.

"The districts and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) should post dedicated and full time persons separately for contact tracing and quarantine or home isolation watch immediately."

"The tracing, tracking and quarantine activity conducted has to be reported in the contact tracing application and quarantine watch application, which shall be activated with necessary re-orientation to all the staff from BBMP and district health authorities," Kumar said.

The circular said that all the Covid-19 positive persons should be triaged by Medical Officer at the PHC and team on ground as per the prevailing instructions (physical triaging).

It also emphasised upon reinitiating the tele-triaging at state level and triaging information should be recorded in index application within BBMP limits and State Line List in rest of the districts.

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The officer also laid emphasis upon deploying further additional teams, if situation warrants, to carry out the surveillance and related activities by the BBMP and district administration in consultation with the State nodal officers.

Central War Room (CWR) of the BBMP along with zonal and assembly constituency level war rooms and all District War Rooms need to be re-activated and made fully functional to monitor and supervise the activities, Kumar said in the circular.

The integrated testing App should be rolled out on pilot basis in BBMP area and if found feasible should be considered for a larger roll out, he said.