

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6895  
ANSWERED ON:07.05.2010  
NEW TESTING METHOD FOR HIV  
Panda Shri Baijayant

**Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:**

- (a) the details of the testing methods in vogue in various hospitals in the country to detect HIV, Hepatitis-A, B, C and other such viruses in the country;
- (b) whether a new testing technique has been developed which reduces the time taken to detect such viruses;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any proposal is under consideration of the Government to equip the Government hospitals with this new testing method and make it obligatory for all blood donors in the country; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI)

- (a) As per the existing provisions of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, every unit of blood has to be mandatorily tested for various blood borne infections such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Presently, the testing for these viruses is based on either ELISA (Enzyme Linked Immuno Sorbent Assay) or through Rapid tests using different principles.
- (b) & (c) A newer technique known as Nucleic-acid Amplification Test (NAT) has been developed which reduces the window period (i.e. a period between acquiring the infection and development of antibodies) of detection of viruses from 10 to 12 weeks to few days.
- (d) & (e) Though NAT testing reduces the window period of detection of viruses, it does not eliminate entirely the risk of transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B & C. Presently, there is no proposal under consideration of the Government hospital blood banks.