

FilmArray Respiratory Panel (FARP) FAQ

1. What is FilmArray Respiratory Panel (FARP) test?

FilmArray Respiratory Panel (FARP) is used to detect multiple respiratory viruses and bacteria infective respiratory conditions.

2. How is FARP test done?

A nasopharyngeal swab specimen needs to be collected for testing.

3. Is FARP test necessary for all respiratory conditions?

Most infective respiratory conditions are caused by viruses, where supportive/symptomatic therapy would be the main treatment (e.g. hydration, rest, fever medications), and antibiotics are not required.

As such, FARP testing is rarely necessary, as it will not usually change the management of patients.

4. How do doctors diagnose viral/bacterial related respiratory infections?

History taking, clinical examination, and basic blood tests can usually determine whether the fever is of viral or bacterial in origin. In both conditions, supportive therapy (e.g. hydration, rest, fever medications) is still the mainstay treatment.

5. Why is FARP generally not covered by insurance?

In general, most patients only require supportive/symptomatic treatment. FARP should not be used as first-line of investigation for patients with infective respiratory conditions. This reduces healthcare costs, and mitigates unnecessary testing on patients that does not add value to patient care.

6. When will FARP be covered by insurance?

Coverage of FARP can be considered when patient's condition meets the following criteria:

- The patient is not responding to initial treatment and require FARP to guide management.
- The patient is in severe condition showing signs of respiratory distress and/or warded in ICU.
- The patient is suffering from prolonged illness and not responding to supportive/conservative treatment.
- The patient is suspected or confirmed to be immunocompromised (e.g. haematopoietic cancer, sepsis, illnesses with ongoing regular steroid treatment, radiotherapy or chemotherapy) for ruling out atypical infection.