

Revised Guidance for Discharge and Ending of Isolation for People Tested Positive to SARS-CoV-2

A. BACKGROUND

At the end of May 2020 the “Interim guidance for discharge/ending of isolation for patients with a confirmed COVID-19 infection” was implemented in Cyprus upon approval by the Advisory Scientific Committee, which was until then based on the existing relevant international bibliography and Cypriot data. As the pandemic develops and scientific knowledge is enriched, it has been deemed necessary to revise this guidance.

Bibliographical data accumulated in the previous months point to the use of **a strategy based on whether symptoms exist or not** in order for a decision to be made regarding the release from isolation. This is in line with most of the recently updated recommendations by international organizations. Succinctly, recent data demonstrate that the possibility of the virus being cultivated from respiratory samples, particularly in people with a mild disease 10 days since the symptoms have appeared is rare. In addition, people whose symptoms have receded may remain positive to PCR examination of respiratory samples for many weeks without, however, being infectious.

It must be reiterated that as the pandemic develops and scientific knowledge takes shape, the guidance may be modified.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

CATEGORY OF POSITIVE-TESTED FROM ISOLATION PERSON	CRITERIA FOR DISCHARGE
ASYMPTOMATIC PERSON A person who has remained asymptomatic throughout the whole period of being monitored	Discharge from isolation 14 days after the positive sample for SARS-CoV-2 has been taken BEFORE the discharge, contact should be made with the attending physician/personal doctor so as to ensure that the above criteria are met.

<p>MILD/MODERATE COVID-19 DISEASE</p> <p>Mild disease: general malaise/tiredness or/and $>37.3^{\circ}\text{C}$, or/and dry cough, or/and muscle pain, or/and loss of smell/taste, weakness/tiredness.</p> <p>Moderate disease: Fever $>38.5^{\circ}\text{C}$, weakness/tiredness, cough, symptoms persisting for over 2 days, CXR or CT (+)</p> <p>(Disease not necessitating hospital treatment)</p>	<p>No fever for at least 3 days (without use of fever-combating medicine) and improvement of all other symptoms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>After 14 days have passed since the onset of symptoms</p> <p>BEFORE the discharge of non-hospitalized persons their attending physician/personal doctor should be contacted so as to ensure that the above criteria are met.</p> <p>In case of brief hospitalisation when the clinical situation of the patients warrants their discharge before the above criteria are fulfilled, they must remain in isolation at home until the above discharge criteria are satisfied.</p>
<p>SERIOUS COVID-19 DISEASE</p> <p>Breathing difficulty with respiratory frequency of $>30/\text{minute}$, or/and $\text{SpO}_2 \leq$ in the air, or/and pulmonary infiltrates $>50\%$ in lung imaging examination, or/and shortness of breath requiring mechanical ventilation, or/and shock (vasoconstrictor drugs), or/and organ failure other than respiratory requiring admittance to an intensive care unit.</p> <p>(Disease necessitating hospital treatment)</p>	<p>No fever for at least 3 days (without use of fever-combating medicine) and improvement of all other symptoms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>After 20 days have passed since the onset of symptoms</p> <p>Hospitalized patients whose clinical condition, according to the judgment of the attending physician, warrants their discharge before the above criteria are satisfied, must remain in isolation at home until the above discharge criteria are met.</p>

<p>IMMUNOCOMPROMISED PATIENTS</p> <p>E.g. persons undertaking chemotherapy for cancer, extended use of corticoids, persons who underwent organ transplant, congenital immuno-deficiencies, HIV positive persons with low CD4.</p>	<p>No fever for at least 3 days (without use of fever-combating medicine) and improvement of all other symptoms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>After 20 days have passed since the onset of symptoms</p>
<p>RESIDENT/PERSONNEL OF HOSPITALITY VENUES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS OF POPULATION</p> <p>Residents of old people's homes, prison inmates, guests in hospitality centres for refugees/migrants/asylum seekers.</p>	<p>These people may be discharged from isolation and return to the hospitality venue for vulnerable groups of the population, if the following criteria are satisfied.</p> <p>No fever for at least 3 days (without use of fever-combating medicine) and improvement of all other symptoms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <p>After 20 days have passed since the onset of symptoms</p>

- **BEFORE the discharge of non-hospitalized patients their attending physician/personal doctor should be contacted so as to ensure that the above criteria are met.**
- The discharge requirement based on laboratory testing (**2 consecutive negative SARS-CoV-2 PCR results from respiratory specimens, taken at least 24 hours in between**) is recommended for special categories, such as e.g. the immunocompromised and seriously ill with COVID-19 patients, particularly when they are transferred from the

Intensive Care Unit to other hospital departments for treatment or to long-term treatment centres.

References:

ECDC Guidance for discharge and ending of isolation of people with COVID-19, 16 October 2020, <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/guidance-discharge-and-ending-isolationpeople-covid-19#no-link>

CDC Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19. Updated Oct. 19, 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

WHO Criteria for releasing COVID-19 patients from isolation, Scientific brief 17 June 2020. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/criteria-for-releasing-covid-19-patients-from-isolation>

Public Health England. Guidance for stepdown of infection control precautions and discharging COVID-19 patients. Updated 30 July 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid19-guidance-for-stepdown-of-infection-control-precautions-within-hospitals-and-discharging-covid-19-patients-from-hospital-to-home-settings/guidance-for-stepdown-of-infection-control-precautions-and-discharging-covid-19-patients>

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