

Discharge of coronavirus cases and close contacts from mandatory confinement

According to the Tracing Team of the Ministry of Health, it has been observed recently that SARS-CoV-2 positive individuals have been discharged from mandatory confinement before the completion of 14 days from the diagnosis, either on the instructions of their Personal Doctor, or on with their own initiative.

Therefore, concerning the handling of confirmed cases and their close contacts, the following are recalled:

1. Handling of positive cases:

Upon a positive result notice, following a rapid antigen test or PCR test (molecular test) from any sampling point, the virus positive person must:

- self-isolate immediately,
- inform their Personal Doctor, and
- expect a phone call from the Ministry of Health.

It is understood that he/she **should not visit any other rapid antigen testing unit to repeat the test**, as there is a risk of the virus spreading to other attendees. It should be noted that, the results from the rapid antigen testing units are communicated to the Epidemiological Monitoring Unit after the completion of the tests, and communication from the Tracing Team takes place within 24 hours. The confirmed case must follow the [instructions for self-isolation](#).

When the confirmed case is contacted by the Tracing Team, information will be requested, which will be used confidentially, solely to identify the source of infection of the positive case, locate their contacts and understand the virus. At the end of the tracing process, the positive case receives, via email or sms and in writing, the instructions for self-isolation, as well as instructions on how to complete his/her close contacts.

The Personal Doctor is **responsible for monitoring the health of his/her patients/beneficiaries, and for the discharge of confirmed cases**, according to the [discharge protocol](#) and **not earlier than 14 days from the diagnosis or the onset of symptoms**. Individuals who do not have a Personal Doctor are discharged by the Epidemiological Monitoring Unit. Upon discharge, **all cases receive a text message indicating the day of discharge**. Sick leave is given by the Personal Doctor.

For general information, confirmed cases can call the number 1474. Moreover, they can call 1420 for reporting worsening symptoms, medical assessment, and the need to be transferred to a hospital. For issues related to the tracing process, communication is possible via telephone at 22771923 or electronically at contacttracing2@moh.gov.cy. For discharge issues, confirmed cases can contact the Discharge Team at the email address covidfollowup@moh.gov.cy.

2. Handling of close contacts of confirmed cases:

Close contacts are determined by specific criteria according to the applicable protocol. During the tracing process the confirmed case is asked to declare the contacts he/she had **two days before the onset of symptoms or two days before the test** (in case

of asymptomatic cases). These data are collected and managed in accordance with the principles of confidentiality, and are used for the sole purpose of tracing and protecting the public health, following the approval of the data protection commissioner.

Close contacts are subjected to a **molecular examination (PCRtest), after the arrangement of an appointment by the Public Health Medical Centres** and, at the same time, they receive [instructions](#) via a text message for self-isolation. Close contacts are placed in **mandatory self-isolation for 14 days from their last contact with the case, regardless of the molecular test result** (contact day is defined as day zero). Close contacts can be discharged earlier **ONLY with a negative PCR result** on the 10th day, from any approved laboratory.

Discharge on the 10th day with a negative PCR result applies only to close contacts and not to positive cases.

Medical and other staff working in hospitals can return to work on the 7th day with a negative PCR result and in consultation with the local infection committee, but remain in a state of social self-isolation for the rest of the remaining days.

In case the close contacts are not isolated from the positive case (e.g. mothers with children, or dependent individuals with their caregivers), then the day of their isolation starts from the day of the release of the positive case, since until the last day before release, the positive person is potentially contagious.

For the tracing and reporting of close contacts within workplaces, hospitals, nursing homes, military bases and reception and accommodation centres for refugees, responsible are the employers or those in charge of the safety and health, or the local infection committees-where they exist, and must send a record of the contacts of the positive cases to the Tracing Team of the Ministry of Health.

Close contacts are **not discharged by their Personal Doctor but only at the end of the days** described above. Individuals who have been declared as close contacts are entitled to a special [leave certificate](#) for public health reasons, which they can present at work and be compensated by the Social Security Services, through an application.

It is understood that **close contacts are not allowed to visit the rapid antigen testing units**, as there is a risk of the virus spreading to other attendees, and they will have to wait for information from the Public Health Medical Centres to schedule an appointment.

Close contacts can call 1474 for general information on COVID-19, or they can communicate by phone at 22771923 or electronically at contacttracing2@moh.gov.cy for issues related to the tracking process.

For violation complaints of self-isolation of cases or close contacts, citizens can call 22606789.