

Management of COVID-19 cases and their close contacts

1. Handling of positive cases:

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

- self-isolate immediately,
- inform their Personal Doctor,
- inform his/her close contacts, employer, school, military camp, etc. 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 as soon as possible.

The virus positive person receives an SMS with the [instructions for the self-isolation of confirmed COVID-19 cases](#) on his/her mobile phone, within 24 hours provided that he/she has been declared to the Epidemiological Monitoring Unit of the Ministry of Health. The virus-positive person must follow the self-isolation instructions he/she receives.

In the instructions, there is a [relevant table](#) where the virus positive person should declare his/her close contacts. This table must be sent by email to contacttracing@moh.gov.cy. Close contacts receive instructions and their tests are planned after they have been declared by a virus positive person.

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 which can be used as a Safe Pass**. In addition to their **discharge** (14 days after the positive result), coronavirus positive individuals can issue a **European Digital Recovery Certificate** for travel purposes within the European Union, via the portal <https://www.eudcc.gov.cy/>.

Sick leave is given by the Personal Doctor.

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, to locate their contacts and to understand the virus.

For general information, positive cases may call 1474. For reporting worsening symptoms, medical assessment and the need to be transferred to a hospital they may call 1420.

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.

If a person has been diagnosed positive to coronavirus and has not received a written message with the instructions within 24 hours, he/she should contact the laboratory or the individual who carried out the test and make sure that he/she has been declared as a positive case and that the contact details kept by the laboratory are correct (e.g. wrong phone number).

It is understood that if the positive results are not declared by the laboratory or the person who carried out the test at the Ministry of Health, it will not be possible for virus positive person to receive the required instructions, to monitor the course of his/her health, to declare his/her contacts, but also to receive all the documents he/she is entitled to upon discharge (e.g. SafePass, EU Digital Covid Certificate).

Persons with a positive Covid test, who have completed their vaccination, follow the procedure normally and are not exempt from self-isolation.

2. Handling of close contacts:

Close contacts are determined by specific criteria in accordance with the following:

- A person living together with a confirmed positive case,
- A person who had direct physical contact with a confirmed positive case (e.g. handshake),
- A person who had unavoidable contact with infectious secretions of a confirmed positive case (e.g. saliva),
- A person who had face to face contact with a confirmed positive case at a distance of less than 2 metres and a duration of more than 15 minutes,
- A person who was in an enclosed space (e.g. classroom, cinema, hospital waiting rooms, etc.) with a confirmed positive case for more than 15 minutes and at a distance less than 2 metres,
- A healthcare professional or other person who provided healthcare to a positive COVID-19 case, or laboratory personnel who handled a sample of a confirmed

case without using appropriate protective equipment or if there was a breach in its integrity; and

- A fellow traveller on an aircraft, persons travelling together or caring for a patient, crew members who served the part of the plane where the patient was seated (possibly all the passengers in the same part of the plane and even all passengers on the flight can be considered as close contacts, if there is more extensive exposure, due to the patient's serious symptoms and his/her movement on board the aircraft).

With the notification of the positive case, the virus positive individual is requested to state 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 confidentiality principles and shall be used only for tracking and public health safety purposes, following the approval of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection.

Close contacts are subjected to a free **molecular examination (PCR test) after an appointment has been arranged by Public Health Clinics, which is scheduled as soon as possible** and receive [instructions via a written message for self-isolation](#). Close contacts are placed in mandatory self-isolation for 14 days from their last contact with the case (contact day defined as day zero).

Close contacts may be released earlier **ONLY with a negative PCR test** on the 7th day from any approved laboratory at their own expense.

Release on day 7 with a negative PCR applies only to close contacts and not to positive cases.

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.

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. In order to obtain this certificate, one must necessarily have been declared as a confirmed case.

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 at contacttracing@moh.com.cy.

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

Any citizen who develops symptoms compatible with COVID-19 disease (Cough, fever, dyspnea, sudden loss of smell, loss and change of taste, headache, muscle pain shivering, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhoea) should contact their Personal Doctor for evaluation and programming of a PCR (molecular examination) test via an online platform at Public Health Clinics, if necessary.

Exception from self-isolation as close contacts are individuals who:

- have been diagnosed as positive cases with a PCR or rapid antigen test within 180 days, or
- have completed their vaccination schedule with any vaccine recognised by the Republic of Cyprus. It is understood that for single-dose vaccines, a period of 14 days after the dose should have elapsed.

However, all close contacts (including those exempted from self-isolation) should be reported by the virus positive individual through the appropriate route, so that their testing by the Public Health Clinics Coordination can be planned.

Citizens can contact 1474 for general information about COVID-19; for issues related to the tracing process they can communicate by phone tel: 22771923 or electronically at contacttracing2@moh.gov.cy.

Employers' obligations can be found in the current protocol <https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/pdf/erg20.pdf>. For clarifications citizens can contact the Health Services of the Ministry of Health.

For violation complaints regarding the self-isolation of positive cases or close contacts, citizens can contact telephone 1460, 22606803, 22606789.

More information about the Decrees and Protocols can be found at www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/.

The Cyprus Police is responsible for the surveillance of the above.

09.07.2021