

## **Revised Protocol for the discharge of coronavirus close contacts from mandatory confinement**

In the framework of the continuous monitoring of new arising data, following a recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Coronavirus, the protocol for the discharge of the close contacts of COVID cases, is revised.

Firstly, it is recalled that close contacts are defined by specific criteria, in accordance with the [protocol](#) currently in force. During the tracing process, the virus positive person is asked 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).

Close contacts undergo a molecular test (**PCR test**), **following an appointment arranged by the Public Health Clinics** and at the same time receive, via a text message, [instructions for self-isolation](#).

Specifically, close contacts are subject to **mandatory self-isolation for 14 days from their last contact with the case, regardless of the laboratory result** (contact day is defined as day zero). Close contacts may be [discharged](#) earlier **ONLY with a negative PCR test on day 7**, from any approved laboratory.

**Discharge on the 7<sup>th</sup> day with a negative PCR result applies only to close contacts and not to positive cases.**

In case the close contacts are not isolated from the positive case (e.g. parents caring for underage children, or caregivers caring for persons unable to care for themselves), then their isolation begins anew, from the day of the discharge of the positive case, since, until the last day before release, the positive person is potentially contagious.

For purposes of tracing and reporting of close contacts within workplaces, hospitals, nursing homes, military bases and reception and accommodation centres for refugees, the responsibility lies with the employers or those in charge of safety and health, or the local infection committees-where applicable, 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 their 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 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 for issues related to the tracing process, they can communicate by phone at 22771923 or electronically at [contacttracing2@moh.gov.cy](mailto:contacttracing2@moh.gov.cy).

### **Management of positive cases:**

At the same time, it is recalled that a person with a positive result after a rapid antigen test or PCR test (molecular test) from any testing unit, must follow the [instructions for self-isolation](#), put him/herself in self-isolation and inform his/her Physician.

It is understood that he/she **should not visit any 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 text message 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 1474, while 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](mailto:contacttracing2@moh.gov.cy). For discharge issues, confirmed cases can contact the Discharge Team at the email address [covidfollowup@moh.gov.cy](mailto:covidfollowup@moh.gov.cy).

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

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