

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 his/her Personal Doctor,
- inform his/her close contacts, employer, school, military camp, etc.,
- terminate his/her self-isolation only after the number of days provided for the discharge protocol have elapsed and after they receiving an SMS for discharge.

It is forbidden to travel by any means of public transport (bus, taxi, plane and boat) for dispersion prevention reasons. Virus-positive individuals who have a scheduled trip are not allowed to travel before their official discharge by their Personal Doctor or the Discharge Team of the Ministry of Health.

For citizens or tourists staying in hotels and for people who can not self-isolate at their home, there is a provision for free state quarantine and transportation by means provided by the Ministry of Health. Persons who do not wish to be accommodated at the state quarantine places, may choose to rent at their own expense private accommodation (apartment, house, villa) and be transported by private vehicle to spend their self-isolation period there, following consultation with the Epidemiological Surveillance and Control Unit for Infectious Diseases (ES&CUID), but they can not continue to stay in a hotel for any reason.

It should be noted that, the results from the rapid antigen testing units are communicated to the ES&CUID after the completion of the tests and within 24 hours virus-positive persons receive a written text (SMS) with the [instructions for the self-isolation of confirmed COVID-19 cases](#) **on the mobile phone they declared during their test**. The virus-positive person must follow the self-isolation instructions he/she receives. In case the virus-positive person is a minor, the guardian's mobile phone should be declared and not the child's.

In the same SMS, the virus-positive person receives access password and a link to confirm his/her details, to declare his/her contacts and his/her Personal Doctor, so that he/she can monitor and discharge him/her and so that he/she has the ability to issue the necessary certificates of discharge when the quarantine is completed.

The social and family contacts of the positive case are declared immediately through the electronic platform, after having been declared by the virus-positive person and subsequently receive self-isolation instructions and their tests are scheduled by the Coordination Public Health Clinics.

In the instructions received by the virus-positive person, there is a relevant table where the virus-positive person can declare additional close contacts, and after completing the electronic form send it by email to contacttracing@moh.gov.cy.

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 10 days from the diagnosis or the onset of symptoms**. Individuals who do not have a Personal Doctor are discharged by the Discharge Team of the ES&CUID. Upon discharge, **all cases receive a text message indicating the discharge date which** can be used for [Safe Pass](#) purposes. In addition to their **discharge** (10 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.

The data collected by the ES&CUID, are solely used 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 (Monday to Sunday 8:00-20:00). For reporting worsening symptoms, medical assessment and the need to be transported to a hospital they may call 1420, 24 hours a day.

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 the 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 the documentation he/she is entitled to upon discharge (e.g. SafePass, EU Digital Covid Certificate).

For discharge issues, confirmed cases can contact the Discharge Team at the email address covidfollowup@moh.gov.cy or at the telephone number 22605306.

Persons with a positive Covid test, who have completed their vaccination or have recovered before the period of 6 months, will follow the normal procedure 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 positive 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 the 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 is 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 virus-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, they must necessarily have been declared by the confirmed case as close contacts. If they have not been declared as close contacts, they are not entitled to a special leave certificate.

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 safety and health, or the local infection committees-where they exist, and they must send a relevant table of the contacts of the positive cases to the Tracing Team of the Ministry of Health at contacttracing@moh.com.cy. For the public educational institutions, responsible for locating and sending the table of close contacts are the local committees of each school as defined by relevant circular of the Ministry of Education.

It is understood that **close contacts are not allowed to visit the rapid antigen testing units**, as there is the 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.

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

- have been diagnosed as virus-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.

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 at Public Health Clinics, if necessary. No citizen should visit his/her work or student/teacher his/her school with active symptoms even if he/she has a negative coronavirus rapid antigen test.

For issues related to the tracing process, the instructions on how to declare close contacts, who is considered a close contact and when is the release date from self-isolation, citizens can communicate by telephone at: 22771923, 22514264, 22514258, 22514259 or by email at contacttracing2@moh.gov.cy (Monday to Sunday 8:00-00:00).

For instructions on completing the electronic form, provided that the virus-positive person has received the link and password, citizens can communicate by telephone at: 22514241, 22514242, 22514243, 22514244 and 22514248 (Monday to Sunday 8:00-00:00).

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 <https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/>.
