

What you should actually do if you've come into contact with someone who tested positive for Covid, or test positive yourself, or become ill.

(Answer provided by MUDr Ludmila Bezdíčková, translated by Dr Marie Bourne)

- 1) Even though the numbers of infected people are rising steeply, as are - gradually - the numbers of admissions to hospital, it still holds true that Covid-19 infection usually manifests in flu-like symptoms which can be easily treated at home with bed rest. Therefore, remaining calm is a reasonable response. To help prevent infection, we advise rest, exercise, staying positive (not in the laboratory sense 😊) and wearing face masks indoors.

- 2) If you have been in contact with somebody who has a confirmed infection with Covid-19 (at present confirmation = positive PCR test), follow self-isolation rules (i.e. stay at home) even if you haven't been contacted by the Public Health Authority, or ring your GP.
If you are feeling completely well, it's not necessary to inform anybody at the weekend. Your GP or Public Health officer will issue a Covid test request form for the 5th – 7th day after your most recent contact with a Covid positive person.
Please do not show up for the test earlier than this if you are symptom-free; the test is timed with the incubation period in mind.
If you experience any symptoms during your self-isolation period, it is of course prudent to have your test immediately. There are no restrictions for your contacts (so called secondary contacts), only if/when your infection is confirmed.
However, if you have strong suspicions that you may be infected, I would advise you to keep the whole household at home until you get your test results.
If the positive contact is a member of your household, the last day of contact is considered to be the day they tested positive.
Quarantine lasts 10 days (even if your test is negative on day 7!) If your test is positive (with or without symptoms) you will be required to self-isolate for 10 days from getting your test.
Even though it is hard, it is important for folks to follow the quarantine/self-isolation rules, otherwise the infection will continue to spread rapidly.

- 3) If there is a sick person with confirmed Covid-19 in the household, it is important to follow basic hygiene rules – a separate room, the sick person should use the bathroom last, ventilation, don't meet elderly family members (don't let the grandparents babysit your kids etc).
All members of the household are in quarantine in this situation and should be tested on the 5-7th day from the sick person's test. If you have symptoms, the test should be carried out immediately.
If a household member tested positive, don't send your kids to school/nursery, even if that person feels well. It is possible that another household member will test positive during the testing period and thus they will become a contact for the rest of the household. In that case, if it is not possible to separate, the quarantine period will be extended for another 10 days for everybody. This is the only way to ensure the infection stops spreading and we ask you to follow these rules.

- 4) Isolation (staying at home / in hospital for people with confirmed Covid-19 infection) lasts a minimum of 10 days, and the person should be symptom-free for at least 3 days before the end of the isolation (loss of taste and smell can last longer, symptoms of acute infection have to have subsided).
Isolation ends without a test. It has been proven that infectiousness decreases rapidly in time and in

symptom-free people after 10 days it is unlikely that they will pass on the infection.

Don't take any unnecessary "just in case" tests! The PCR method is very sensitive.

It is unclear how to proceed if you have a positive test result after 10 days (you are 98% non-infectious). Having had a confirmed Covid-19 infection you will be regarded as immune for the next 90 days; if you come into contact with a Covid positive person you will not be required to go into quarantine or to be tested.

- 5) During quarantine, please behave responsibly. Don't go shopping, order online if you can. Don't come into contact with those at risk. Remain in regular contact with your GP – by email or by phone.
- 6) If you or your loved ones suffer shortness of breath, blueish fingers, a collapse, intense fatigue, confusion or fevers that do not respond to over-the-counter medication then you must call an ambulance immediately using the number 155.
- 7) Please be patient and understanding when you call your GP. We have been receiving up to 80-100 calls a day (as well as doing our usual work – looking after the acutely and chronically sick). If you are calling with a Covid query please have all the relevant information at hand (date of contact, were you indoors / outside, distance, were you wearing masks?, your address including the post code, your telephone number). You may send all this info by email if you have an agreement with your doctor. Your doctor / the public health officer will decide whether this was a so called epidemiologically significant contact and will decide regarding the need for quarantine accordingly. (epidemiologically significant contact = under 1,5m, no face mask, longer than 15 mins).
- 8) If you are unable to reach your GP / Public Health Authority and you know you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid, stay at home. We can backdate your sick note for up to 3 days.
- 9) If you have symptoms of infection please do not come to the GP's surgery if at all possible without making prior arrangements. If you are in the waiting room, let the nurse know immediately. At the same time, lots of diseases are impossible to diagnose by phone and it is necessary for you to attend in person. If we make arrangements, we can wear personal protective equipment and see you safely. There is more to medicine than Covid. The care of both the acutely and chronically ill carries on as usual. We continue to provide preventive check-ups – please don't put these off because of the pandemic.
- 10) Be mindful of the elderly in your family and around you. Don't visit them if you are feeling ill, but instead make regular telephone contact, order their shopping for them. If you suspect infection please contact their GP and seek their advice. The current restrictive measures are not popular but it seems it is the only way to decrease the pressure on our hospitals. We can have an influence on how rapidly the number of sick people will increase. On behalf of us doctors I promise we will try to communicate clearly, if we continue to be given the opportunity to do so.