



Instructions for persons under home-based isolation

Quarantine is used when a person is possibly infected with a disease but is not yet symptomatic. **Isolation** applies to patients with symptoms of infectious disease.

The Chief Epidemiologist is authorized to take such measures according to article 12 of the [Act on Health Security and Communicable Diseases](#).

Isolation:

Individuals that are suspected to have the COVID-19 infection or are laboratory confirmed and do not require hospital stay, should be isolated at home or at locations specified by the Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management or the health care system.

At onset of home-based isolation, the following should be reviewed with the person concerned, by the primary care clinic or 1700 (Laeknavaktin-on call doctors):

- A healthcare professional provides detailed information on infection pathways and symptoms of the COVID-19 infection. The information can also be found on the website of the [Directorate of Health](#).
- Contact and droplet contamination spread the disease. This means that there is risk of spreading the virus when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or blows their nose, and a healthy person inhales these droplets or they land on their hands and they then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.
- If interaction with others is inevitable, the patient should pay close attention to hand hygiene and wear a facemask if coughing or sneezing frequently. If a facemask is not available, covering their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing is important. The tissue should be discarded into a plastic bag immediately after use and hands cleaned thoroughly.
- A person in isolation should stay in the household and have contact with as few people as possible.
 - A person in isolation **must not** leave the household unless necessary, e.g. to seek necessary health care services, after consulting with a primary care clinic/1700 (+354 544 4113)/112. Routine medical or dental check-ups, attending physiotherapy or visits to medical specialists that are not related to the COVID-19 virus are not considered essential health care while in isolation and all such service should be rescheduled. **If illness (worsening COVID-19 disease or other illness) or an accident occurs while in isolation and medical attention is required, the person who contacts the primary care clinic, 1700 (+354 544 4113) or 112 should notify the responder of the need for isolation precautions. This allows the responder to arrange the necessary precautions for the medical staff involved in providing care, but should NOT delay or inhibit access to necessary healthcare.**

- A person in isolation **must not** use public transport or taxis. If she/he needs to seek necessary health care services, she/he may use a private car if she/he, or someone that is also in isolation or quarantine in his household, are able to drive, otherwise ambulance assistance should be obtained by calling 1700 (+354 544 4113)/112.
- A person in isolation **must not** attend school or work with other people. **A medical certificate from a primary care clinic might be needed. Employers have been instructed to be considerate if an employee needs to be isolated until she/he is fit to come to work again (at least 10 days after fever resolves).**
- The patient **must not** attend any gatherings, whether it concerns his work, family or social life. For example, work meetings or gatherings, union meetings, confirmations, funerals, home-based social gatherings, choir rehearsal, concerts, etc.
- The patient **must not** visit fitness centers, swimming pools, theaters, cinemas, shopping malls, or other places where people come together.
- The patient **must not** himself go for supplies/necessities, i.e. pharmacy, grocery store, post office, banks, etc.
- The patient **must not** stay in shared condominiums, i.e. stairwell, laundry rooms, or shared yards/outdoor areas.
- The patient **may not** welcome guests in the home during isolation.
- The patient **can** go out to a balcony or private garden. If there are other people there, the patient must go inside again and pay attention to hand hygiene before touching door handles etc.
- The patient **can** go for a ride using a private car but not with others, unless they are under quarantine or isolation, but the patient **must not** interact with others in close proximity, e.g. drive thru restaurants.
- Individual in isolation **can** take out the trash if healthy enough, if there are no others in the household that can do it. The isolated individual should wear a facemask if he is likely to meet others in shared condominiums, or carry a tissue to use when coughing and sneezing and clean hands before and after opening the garbage chute/trashcan/trash room and wipe of any handles with 70% alcohol or other disinfectants after contact.
- Ideally isolation is on an individual basis. A family/group who shares the same exposure can be quarantined together. Family members who are well should limit contact with the person with symptoms as much as feasible. They should stay beyond 1 meter distance from the patient as much as possible. **If someone else in the household falls ill then it prolongs the quarantine time of the others in the household.**
 - Windows in shared spaces should be kept open, such as kitchen and bathroom.
 - Shared spaces and contact surfaces should be cleaned thoroughly, such as the handle of the refrigerator, light switches and doorknobs.
 - The patient should have access to toilet facilities for their use only and should sleep in a separate room from others, or a separate bed if another room is not available.
 - Wash hands or use hand sanitizer after contact with the patient or his environment. (see guidelines on [hand hygiene](#) and infection prevention on the Directorate of Health's website)
 - Tissues used by the patient for covering or wiping the face should be disposed of in a plastic bag which can then be discarded in the general trash receptacles.

- Hand sanitizer should be accessible in the patient's environment.
- Contact with other people must be strictly limited. Therefore, a patient in isolation may need assistance with necessities. If someone in the household is in isolation, other members of the same household must be under quarantine if they were around the patient when first symptoms appeared.
 - When the whole household is in isolation or quarantine, friends and relatives can assist with necessities and leave at the front door.
 - If delivery of food and other necessities are available in the area, this service can be utilized during quarantine
 - It is possible to contact the Red Cross for necessities if needed. Anyone that is quarantined in Iceland can contact the Red Cross helpline at 1717 (+354 580 1710 for foreign numbers) or online at www.1717.is. There you can ask for assistance, get support or information and talk to someone in confidence. The helpline is open 24/7 is free of charge.
 - If the patient requires assistance or care, the same person should provide it for the duration of illness. Avoid direct contact with secretions (mucus, vomit, stool etc.). Keep single use gloves handy for use if contact with secretions is unavoidable
 - Wash hands or use hand sanitizer after contact with the patient or his environment
- A contact from the local health care services should be in daily contact with the patient by phone or visit for the duration of the isolation.
 - The patient must measure and record their body temperature daily.
 - If a patient develops worsening symptoms they should get in touch with their health care contact or call 1700 (on an Icelandic line) or +354 544 4113 (from any phone) for further guidance.
 - If a patient under isolation becomes suddenly seriously ill requiring transfer to hospital by ambulance, when calling 112 the suspicion of or confirmed COVID-19 infection must be made clear.

Isolation for COVID-19 can be lifted by a doctor when BOTH the following criteria are met:

- **14 days have passed from the confirmation of COVID-19 illness**

AND

- **The patient has been symptom free for at least 7 days**

If there is any doubt that both criteria apply, a repeat test for COVID-19 may be needed to determine whether isolation may be lifted.

After the period of isolation the convalescent patient should continue to avoid contact with individuals with risk factors for severe disease as further explained by their doctor. Continued careful attention to hygiene and hand washing is strongly recommended.