

Isolation, quarantining, and self-surveillance

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Isolation and quarantining protect the healthy population from being infected by people already suffering from or possibly harbouring the infection.

- **Isolation:** Isolates the infected, symptomatic patients from the healthy population.
- **Quarantining:** Separates symptom-free individuals suspected to be infected and restricts their freedom of movement. The purpose of the observation of the quarantine is to prevent the transmission of the infection, as well as to ascertain whether the infection has occurred, and whether the individual under observation will develop clinical disease.
- **Self-surveillance:** Self-monitoring by symptom-free individuals, who have come into occasional contact with patients infected by the COVID-19 coronavirus. The latter also includes persons returning from the regions where the new coronavirus is spreading within the community. Self-surveillance comprises being on the alert for the onset of the symptoms characteristic of infection by the COVID-19 coronavirus (such as any grade of fever, cough, and shortness of breath) for 14 days from the last time they had contact.

WHAT ARE THE KEY FEATURES?

Isolation

- In case of isolation implemented in an inpatient care institution, the free movement of the contagious patient, as well as their right to maintain contact with others, may be restricted.
- In case of failure to fulfil the obligation to undergo isolation, the contagious patient shall be required to comply by the competent local healthcare and public administrative bodies – that is, the public health department of the borough or district authority.

Quarantining

- The quarantined individual may be restricted, for the duration of the observation, in their right to practice their profession, to maintain contact with others, and to the freedom of movement.
- The public health department of the competent local (borough or district) authority shall adopt a decision on placing the individual under isolation or quarantine for epidemiological reasons.
- Any individual placed under individual under isolation or quarantine for epidemiological reasons shall be obliged to:

- Attend the required medical examination, or – if rendered incapable by the disease to attend – submit themselves to the examination at his/her current location;
- Provide – or to allow the collection of the – samples and specimens required for the necessary laboratory tests;
- Comply with the instructions by the medical professionals.

The characteristics of epidemiological lockdown

- An epidemiological lockdown is a more restricted form of isolation or quarantine implemented according to special requirements, at a location designated for this purpose.
- The individual placed under lockdown is forbidden to leave the location where the lockdown has been implemented.

ISOLATION because of the COVID-19 virus

Who will be placed under isolation?

1. **Cases suspect for infection:** Patients with acute airway infections, exhibiting at least one of the following symptoms: fever (body temperature of ≥ 38 °C), cough, shortness of breath – with a sudden onset and regardless of the severity of the disease; – AND –
Individuals who have been during the preceding 14 days in close contact with a person with possible or confirmed infection by the new coronavirus; – OR –
Who have visited the regions affected by the coronavirus, where the spreading of the infection within communities may be suspected.
2. **Confirmed case:** All patients with the laboratory diagnosis of infection by the new coronavirus (with or without clinical manifestations).

Who has the authority to order placement under isolation?

Placement under isolation is ordered by the public health department of the competent local borough/district authority.

Is the patient obliged to undergo isolation?

Yes. Anyone ordered by the public health department of the competent local borough/district authority is obliged to undergo isolation.

Where will the isolation be implemented?

In the case of suspected infection by the COVID-19 virus, isolation will be implemented at a designated infectology department, until a laboratory test is undertaken to exclude or confirm infection. If the laboratory test for COVID-19 infection yields a positive result, then the infected patient will be isolated at the South Pest Central Hospital/National Institute of Haematology and Infectology.

Are isolated patients allowed to have visitors?

No.

Are the isolated patients allowed to leave the place assigned to them?

No.

How long does the isolation last?

Patients may be released from the isolation following the resolution of disease symptoms, as well as after their laboratory testing for the COVID-19 has yielded negative results in multiple samples obtained on several subsequent days.

QUARANTINING because of the COVID-19 virus

Who will be placed under quarantine?

1. Health care professionals who undertook the nursing care and management of COVID-19 patients without wearing personal protective equipment.
2. Any symptomatic individual who has come into close contact with a patient suspected or confirmed to be infected by the new coronavirus during the persistence, as well as during the two days preceding the onset of the symptoms.
3. Those asymptomatic individuals who have come into occasional contact with patients infected by the COVID-19 virus, including those returning from the regions affected by the community spreading of the new coronavirus.

Who has the authority to order placement under quarantine?

Placement under isolation is ordered by the public health department of the competent local borough/district authority.

Is the patient obliged to undergo quarantine?

Yes. Anyone ordered by the public health department of the competent local borough/district authority is obliged to undergo quarantine.

Where will the quarantining be implemented?

In case of suspected infection by the COVID-19 virus, quarantining will be implemented according to the order issued by the public health department of the complement local (borough/district) authority:

- at the South Pest Central Hospital/National Institute of Haematology and Infectology
- at the designated infectology department responsible for the given catchment area
- in the home of the individual involved (HOME QUARANTINE)

Are the quarantined patients allowed to have visitors?

No.

Are the quarantined patients allowed to leave the place assigned to them?

No.

How long does the quarantine last?

The incubation time of the COVID-19 virus is 2 to 12 days; however – as a precautionary measure – quarantining lasts for 14 days (2 weeks). If the symptoms of infection by the COVID-19 virus develop during this period, quarantining may be transformed into isolation.

PERSONAL VIGILANCE

Symptom-free individuals not placed by the authorities under isolation or quarantine for epidemiological reasons are free to decide themselves whether to use – for their own sake and responsibility – safeguards that are stricter than the general precautionary measures

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

Can I do anything for my family members, friends, and relatives placed under home quarantine and hence unable to leave their home?

Yes, you can – actually, it is very important not to abandon these people! Regular phone calls and exchanges of e-mail messages can help a lot in this situation. As they are home bound all day and night, they will need help even in securing their daily food, medication, and other items. Offer to shop for them, and to lend a hand in making their everyday routine smoother!

May I deliver the purchased goods into the apartment of an individual placed under home quarantine?

No, no one is allowed to enter the apartment. Place the packed goods in front of the door, and leave at once. Using an agreed signal (e.g. knocks on the door, a telephone call), notify the involved person as soon as possible on the arrival of the requested delivery.

May I walk the dog instead of an individual placed under home quarantine?

Yes, but only if this can be arranged by not meeting the person quarantined. Once you have finished your walk with the dog, remember to wash your hands thoroughly! The safest and most straightforward solution would be if someone or a family – with whom and whose surroundings the dog is familiar – could provide for the temporary accommodation of the animal.

DO YOU NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE?

If you have further questions, please use the following contact details – helping you will be our pleasure!

- Telephone numbers: +36 80 277 455 and +36 80 277 456
- E-mail address: koronavirus@bm.gov.hu
- Website: <https://koronavirus.gov.hu/>
- Facebook and Messenger: <https://www.facebook.com/koronavirus.gov.hu/>

Sources: Act CLVI of 1997 on healthcare

Procedure relating the new coronavirus identified in the year 2020 (epidemiological and infection control rules to be followed), 2 March 2020