



18th September 2020

COVID Alert Malta

Malta's national contact-tracing app, COVID Alert Malta, was launched this morning. It is designed to help protect individuals and their loved ones by alerting them if they were in close contact with persons infected with COVID-19 virus.

The app works in a completely confidential way. It doesn't store any personal details and doesn't reveal the identity of infected persons or of their contacts. It doesn't track where users are located. The app works in the background, using Bluetooth to exchange secret codes between mobile phones that are less than 2 metres close to each other for at least 15 minutes. It uses little battery power. If an app user is informed by Public Health that he/she is positive for the COVID-19 virus, he/she will be given a code to be entered voluntarily into the app. This will send secret codes to the mobile phones of persons who were close to the infected person, informing them they might have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. The contacts will be encouraged to call Helpline 111 for advice.

Helpline 111 will offer symptomatic persons a swab test and advise them to self-isolate for the whole period with symptoms and 24 hours after the symptoms subside. If the person asks for further instructions with respect to measures to be taken specifically for his/her case, they will be referred to the Contact Tracing team (covid19.tracing@gov.mt). They will also be advised to follow strict hygiene measures.

Helpline 111 will also offer asymptomatic persons a swab test. They won't be asked to self-isolate, but they will be asked to monitor for symptoms and request a swab test if symptoms develop. They will also be advised to limit social activity and apply social distancing measures as much as possible so as to limit risk of transmission especially to vulnerable persons. They will also be advised that at the workplace maximal precautions should be adhered to, such as wearing of masks at all times, hand hygiene, social distancing; if possible, meetings are to be held online.

The more persons use the app, the more it will be effective, as it will notify more potentially infected users. The app does not replace traditional contact tracing, but it provides a new tool to combat the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The app is available in the Google Play Store (for Android users) and in the Apple App Store (for iPhone users). For information, please go to <https://covidalert.gov.mt>. In case of technical problems, please write to covidalert@gov.mt.

Please encourage your patients to download and use **COVID Alert Malta**. Thank you for your constant support.

Best regards,

Prof. Charmaine Gauci
Superintendent of Public Health