

Guidance on quarantine

Who needs to undergo mandatory quarantine?

Mandatory quarantine is ONLY issued by Public Health Authorities and is only valid if a notice of mandatory quarantine is issued by Public Health, or upon demonstration of a valid boarding pass in the case of authorised persons arriving in Malta from abroad from countries under the travel ban - according to the medical protocol for testing and quarantine; unauthorised travellers to Malta, or persons arriving from an amber corridor country who have not presented the required negative PCR swab test report and have refused testing, or test positive for COVID-19 on arrival in Malta may also be placed in mandatory quarantine.

Private companies, employers, testing centres or helpline agents do not have the authority to place somebody in mandatory quarantine. They can only recommend that a person 'self-isolates' for a period, however such periods of 'self-isolation' need to be deducted from sick leave or vacation leave.

Persons entering Malta after having travelled in any country under the travel ban or for the reasons outlined above, must go into mandatory quarantine for 14 days immediately on arrival. They can resume their activities on the day following the 14 day period of quarantine only when released from quarantine by the health authorities, after a negative test taken on day 7-10. The 14-day period starts from the day of arrival from any country to Malta and ends at midnight on the 14th day. E.g. quarantine starting on 7th April ends at midnight on 21st April. This is enforceable by law. Failure to observe this obligation will result in fines of €3,000 each time a person is found to be in breach of quarantine.

Persons living in the same household as any of the above persons must also spend 14 days in mandatory quarantine. This is enforceable by law. Failure to observe this obligation will result in fines of €3,000, each time a person is found to be in breach of quarantine

Persons who test positive for COVID-19 must also undergo mandatory self-isolation. The duration of this mandatory quarantine is determined by Public Health Authorities. This is enforceable by law. Failure to observe this obligation will result in fines of €10,000 each time a person is found to be in breach of quarantine.

A close contact who forms part of the household of a confirmed case and who lives with a positive case must remain in mandatory quarantine until cleared and notified by public health (i.e. for as long as the positive case is under quarantine). This may be longer than 14 days. This is enforceable by law. Failure to observe this obligation will result in fines of €10,000 each time a person is found to be in breach of quarantine.

Persons identified by the Public Health Authorities as close contacts of confirmed cases and who do not live in the same household as the confirmed cases will be put under mandatory quarantine for 14 days from the last day of contact with the person who tested positive, provided they do not develop any symptoms related to COVID-19. This is enforceable by law. Persons breaking mandatory quarantine will be fined €3,000 each time a person is found to be in breach of quarantine.

What does mandatory quarantine mean?

Mandatory quarantine means legally enforceable self-isolation in your home, and **NOT** leaving the house for the period that one is required to quarantine for. During this period of mandatory quarantine, no visitors should be allowed. Those in quarantine should monitor for symptoms and self-monitor their temperature twice daily.

Does this mean my family or other people I live with also need to undergo quarantine?

Yes, all the other members living in the same household must undergo mandatory quarantine as well.

When does the mandatory quarantine related to travel end?

People who are in mandatory quarantine due to travel who have never tested positive for COVID-19 can resume their activities on the day following the 14-day period of quarantine, provided they do not develop any symptoms related to COVID-19. The 14-day period starts from the day of arrival from any country to Malta and ends at midnight of the 14th day. E.g. quarantine starting on 7th April ends at midnight on 21st April. This also applies to persons living in the same household, as any of the above persons must also spend 14 days in mandatory quarantine.

When does the mandatory quarantine related to a close contact of a COVID-19 positive person end?

This depends on whether the person identified by the Public Health Authorities as being close contacts of confirmed cases lives in the same household as the confirmed case.

Persons identified by the Public Health Authorities as close contacts of confirmed cases who are not living in the same household will be put under mandatory quarantine for 14 days from the last day of contact with the positive case, provided they do not develop any symptoms related to COVID-19.

Persons living in the same household as the positive case (i.e. household contacts) must remain in mandatory quarantine for as long as the positive case him/herself is in mandatory quarantine. Household contacts should therefore expect to spend a minimum of 14 days in mandatory quarantine, or possibly longer, depending on when the Public Health Authorities release the positive case from mandatory quarantine. This period of mandatory quarantine may be reset if another member of the household tests positive for Covid-19 during the quarantine period.

When does the mandatory quarantine of a COVID-19 positive person end?

For people who have tested positive for COVID-19, the duration of mandatory quarantine is subject to the assessment carried out by the clinical team and by Public Health Authorities.

When does the mandatory quarantine related to a household member of a COVID-19 positive person end?

Household members who live with a person recovering from COVID-19 must also follow the same quarantine procedures as that of the COVID-19 person as outlined above. Provided that they and all other household members do not develop COVID-19, they will also be released from home isolation at the same time as the person with COVID-19.

Why is Staying at home very important?

Staying at home helps to protect your family, friends, colleagues and the wider community. It will also help to control the spread of the virus. This may be difficult or frustrating, however, there are steps you can take to make it easier. These include:

- Asking friends or family to drop off anything you need or order supplies online. Make sure any deliveries are left on your doorstep for you to collect.
- Keeping in touch with friends and family over the phone or through social media.
- Keeping yourself busy by cooking, reading online learning and watching films.
- Taking online courses or classes to help you to exercise in your home.

Keeping spirits up while in quarantine

Being in quarantine can be frightening, particularly for young children: Talk to the other members of the family about the infection. Understanding novel coronavirus will reduce anxiety.

- Reassure young children using age-appropriate language.
- Keep up a normal daily routine as much as possible.
- Think about how you have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassure yourself that you will cope with this situation too.

Reducing boredom while in quarantine

Being confined to your home for an extended period can cause boredom, stress and conflict:

- Arrange with your employer to work from home, if possible.
- Ask your child's school to supply assignments, work sheets and homework by email.
- Don't rely too heavily on the television and technology. Treat quarantine as an opportunity to catch up with some things you don't usually have time for, such as board games, creative art or craft, drawing and reading.
- Exercise regularly. Options could include dancing, floor exercises, yoga, walking around the garden or using home exercise equipment, such as a stationary bicycle, if you have one. Exercise is a proven treatment for stress and depression.
- Keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media.

What do I do if I am in quarantine and develop symptoms?

If you develop any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Tiredness
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Headache
- Muscle Pain
- Loss of smell
- Loss of taste or altered taste
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting

- ✓ Remain at home.
- ✓ DO NOT go to private clinics, emergency department, health centres, pharmacies or other healthcare facilities.
- ✓ Phone the Public Health Helpline on 111 for advice.

What is self-isolation?

- Self-isolation means that you must remain strictly within your household separate from the rest of the household members where possible.
- Stay away from others
- As much as possible stay within a specific "sick room" using a separate bathroom and toilet. The "sick room" should always be adequately ventilated. Open any windows as much as possible. Air conditioners at home do not provide ventilation, but only change the temperature. You should eat meals within this same "sick room". Where possible use a separate toilet/bathroom. If this is not possible, use the toilet after the other household members and use your own separate toiletries. This should be then well ventilated with fresh air for a minimum of 1 hour, and thereafter carefully cleaned with a neutral detergent, followed by decontamination of surfaces using a disinfectant effective against viruses.
- You should wear a face mask within the home if you cannot be isolated from other members of the household.
- No visitors are allowed into your home.

Whom can I contact if I have questions?

Persons who test positive for COVID-19 should contact the Discharge and Follow up Team on covid19.followup@gov.mt.

Contacts who have been placed in mandatory quarantine should contact the Contact Tracing Team on covid19.tracing@gov.mt. Please provide detailed information including name, surname, ID card number and phone number to enable us to find your records in our database.

