

Coronavirus COVID-19 -information for the infected patients and those exposed

1. General information

The most common symptoms of the coronavirus (Covid-19) are sore throat, runny nose, cough, fever, muscle pains, abdominal discomfort/pain or loss of taste or smell. In some of the infected patients, the disease is almost asymptomatic.

COVID-19 is transmitted in close contact from one person to another via respiratory droplets. When speaking and coughing, a person with a coronavirus can send small droplets on the face of a nearby person.

The droplets can also be transferred from one person to another through the hands, for example, when shaking hands.

A doctor specialised in infectious diseases may order you to be **quarantined**, if you have been exposed to the coronavirus i.e. if you have been in close contact with a person ill with coronavirus.

If you have been tested positive to a coronavirus infection, the infectious diseases doctor will **isolate** you.

The quarantine or isolation imposed by the communicable disease control authorities are not recommendations, but orders. According to the Finnish law, breaking the quarantine or isolation regulations can lead to a fine or imprisonment. Other operators, e.g. the employer, cannot change the duration of the isolation or the quarantine.

The quarantine and isolation are used to prevent the spreading of the disease to other people.

It is possible to receive a communicable diseases allowance for the duration of the isolation or quarantine. For more information, contact your employer or Kela.

2. Positive test result

If the COVID-19 test sample taken from you is positive, you have contracted a coronavirus COVID-19 infection.

You will first receive information about the isolation by phone and you will be sent a written isolation decision later. The isolation lasts the minimum of **10** days from the beginning of the symptoms. This period must include two days without symptoms. If your symptoms last longer, the infectious diseases doctor in your home municipality will continue your isolation. In this matter the foreign patients should contact the coronavirus nurse of the Northern Ostrobothnia Hospital District tel. +358 46920 3665 (telephone service 8.00 -20.00)

Isolation usually takes place at home. Those in need of hospital treatment will be isolated at the hospital.

When the contact tracer calls you, you should tell them of all your close contacts during the 48 hours before the symptoms began and from that moment onward. Close contact takes place when the distance between people is less than 2 metres, if a one-time contact lasts for more than 15 minutes or when people have spent a longer time in a group, for instance, work colleagues in the same premises during the same shift.

The contact tracers will find these people and impose an official quarantine on them. A personal notification made by the person ill with a coronavirus is not a legal quarantine.

After the isolation has ended, you can return to work/school and move freely in public spaces. A new test will not be taken.

A test made with the Pcr technique can remain positive for a long time after you have been ill, even if you are no longer contagious.

3. Person exposed to coronavirus

- Those who have been in close contact with a person with a coronavirus COVID-19 disease and who live in the same household may have unknowingly become infected, i.e. they have been exposed to the coronavirus.
- You will receive notification of the quarantine by phone and the written quarantine decision will be sent to you later.
- The exposure quarantine lasts **14** days from the last possible close contact with a COVID-19 positive person.
- If you live in the same household with a COVID-19 positive person, the duration of the quarantine is at least **14** days. This is due to the fact that your close contact with the person infected with a coronavirus continues.
- The quarantine period is the same as the incubation period of the disease, i.e. the time during which the symptoms usually begin after infection. Follow closely if you develop any symptoms.
- If you are asymptomatic at the end of the quarantine, you will be able to return to work / school and move freely in public places without having to take a test.
- If you become ill during your exposure quarantine, go for the test immediately and wait for the result at home.
- The exposure quarantine cannot be shortened with a negative test result!

4. Follow these instructions when you are ordered in isolation/ quarantine:

- Stay at home.
- You may only meet the persons living in the same household.
- If there are infected persons living in the same household, avoid any unnecessary contact to them.
- You may not invite anyone to visit you or visit anyone yourself.
- You may not go to work, school or hobbies.

- You may not go shopping, to the pharmacy, visit a shopping mall, go to the swimming pool, cinema, restaurant or any other public spaces.
- You may not use public transport such as train, bus or taxi.
- You can go outdoors, but you must stay more than 2 metres away from other people.
- Ask someone else to do the groceries (buy food) for you or order your food online or via the phone. Make sure that you are not in close contact with the food supplier when you pay and receive the food delivery.
- If you have got the coronavirus and you have been isolated, you will have to be available by phone at all times. So make sure that your phone's battery is charged and also answer the calls coming from an unknown number.
- **If you start feeling worse, ask for further instructions from your local municipality's helpline. The joint emergency services for Oulu region has a 24-hour helpline 116 117, or call an ambulance (emergency number 112) if your symptoms are severe.**

Serious symptoms include increased shortness of breath, sharp pain in the chest, loss of consciousness, and very high fever. **During the call, tell the nurse about your coronavirus infection or exposure.**

5. Ways to prevent infections

- Meet other people only when you are completely healthy
- When you are ill, stay home and have yourself tested.
- Keep a safe distance to other people
- Use a respiratory protection (face mask), when there are other people close to you.
- Cough and sneeze in your sleeve with elbow bent or use a disposable handkerchief.
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after you have touched your face mask, your face or if you have blown your nose. Use hand disinfectant when it is available, for instance, when you go to a shop or a store and there are other people present. Alcohol-based hand disinfectant temporarily destroys the pathogens in the hands.