



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
Palackého náměstí 375/4, 128 01 Prague 2

Prague, 24 September 2020

Ref. No. MZDR 40555/2020-1 /MIN/KAN



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EXTRAORDINARY MEASURE

The Ministry of Health, as the competent administrative authority, pursuant to Section 80(1)(g) of Act No. 258/2000 Coll., on Public Health Protection and the amendment to certain related acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as “Act No. 258/2000 Coll.”), **orders** this Extraordinary Measure, proceeding pursuant to Section 69(1)(b) and (2) of Act No. 258/2000 Coll., in order to protect the population and prevent the occurrence and spread of the COVID-19 disease caused by the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus:

I.

Effective **from 12:00 a.m. on 25 September 2020 until the repealing** of this Extraordinary Measure, all healthcare service providers in the fields of general practical medicine and pediatric practical medicine, all regional public health authorities and the City of Prague Public Health Authority, are ordered to proceed to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, in that

1. all persons who have a positive RT-PCR test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 virus (hereinafter a “positively tested person”) shall be ordered into isolation pursuant to Section 2(6) of Act No. 258/2000 Coll. for a period of at least 10 days from the collection of the diagnostic sample which proved the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus;
2. isolation shall be terminated after the passing of at least 10 days for persons who do not show any clinical symptoms of the COVID-19 disease, without performing a RT-PCR test;
3. persons who show clinical symptoms of the COVID-19 disease will remain in isolation for the duration of the clinical symptoms of the disease, and isolation will be terminated after the passing of at least another 3 days, when the person no longer shows clinical symptoms of COVID-19 disease or if the lasting clinical symptoms can be explained otherwise; the total period of isolation must be no less than 10 days and shall be terminated without performing a RT-PCR test.

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Effective from 12:00 a.m. on 25 September 2020 until the repealing of this Extraordinary Measure, all healthcare service providers in the fields of general practical medicine and pediatric practical medicine, all regional public health authorities and the City of Prague Public Health Authority, are ordered to proceed to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, in that

1. all persons who were identified as persons who were exposed to a person who tested positive based on an epidemiological investigation shall be ordered into quarantine pursuant to Section 2(7) of Act No. 258/2000 Coll. for at least 10 days from their last contact with the positively tested person;
2. for persons who were ordered into quarantine, a RT-PCR test for the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus shall be conducted within 5 - 7 days from their last contact with the person who tested positive, but at latest by the 10th day;
3. in the case of a negative result of the RT-PCR test and absence of clinical symptoms of the COVID-19 disease, quarantine may be terminated after 10 days;
4. if the RT-PCR test cannot be performed within 10 days from the last contact with the person who tested positive, the quarantine of asymptomatic persons shall be terminated without a test after 14 days from their last contact with the positively tested person;
5. if the clinical symptoms of COVID-19 appear in the person during the period of imposed quarantine, a RT-PCR test shall be conducted; if the imposed quarantine measure was only medical supervision, quarantine shall be imposed immediately after detecting clinical symptoms;
6. in the case of a positive RT-PCR test result performed under points 2, 3 or 5, isolation will be imposed pursuant to Art. I.

III.

Effective from 12:00 a.m. on 25 September 2020 until the repealing of this Extraordinary Measure, all healthcare service providers in the fields of general practical medicine and pediatric practical medicine, all regional public health authorities and the City of Prague Public Health Authority, are ordered to proceed to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, in that for persons who have repeated positive RT-PCR test results for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 virus and whose non-infectious status must be confirmed in order to terminate isolation, an examination using an alternative test shall be conducted, namely through virus cultivation at a specialised laboratory.

IV.

Extraordinary Measure of the Ministry of Health of 24 August 2020, ref. no MZDR 15757/2020-32/MIN/KAN, is repealed effective from 25 September 2020.

V.

This extraordinary measure takes effect on the date of its issue.

Rationale:

The latest extraordinary measure in the area of rules for imposing and terminating isolation and quarantine led to the shortening of the period of isolation and quarantine from 14 days to 10 days, based on new findings about the COVID-19 disease, in order to optimize the ratio of the benefits of anti-epidemic measures related to restricting personal freedom and the negative impact of these measures on society. The results of recent scientific studies have shown a decline in the RNA concentration of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the upper respiratory passages among infected persons, following the onset of clinical symptoms. Hence, the gradual declining concentration of the virus in the upper respiratory passages of persons positively tested based on the clinical image of COVID-19 disease can be expected, and consequently the decline of their infectiousness in the days after sampling. After 10 days from this diagnostic sampling, the absolute majority of positively tested persons who do not show any clinical symptoms of COVID-19 disease from the 7th day after sampling are non-infectious for others. Asymptomatic persons secrete a much lower quantity of the virus than individuals with symptoms. For this reason, the clinical symptoms do not appear in them and their infectiousness is probably lower than among persons with clinical symptoms. Therefore, in the vast majority of cases, persons without clinical symptoms indicated on the basis of high-risk contact with a positive person, whose RT-PCR test result is positive, are non-infectious for others within ten days from diagnostic sampling. Furthermore, the detection of viral RNA does not necessarily mean that the tested person is infectious and able to transmit the virus to another person. A viable virus is isolated only minimally from infected persons after more than ten days from when the disease was detected. In samples from patients who have recovered from initial COVID-19 disease and who subsequently showed new symptoms and tested positive again, the virus capable of replication in cells was not detected. Based on this information, the isolation of positively tested persons may be ordered for only 10 days from the diagnostic sampling with respect to all asymptomatic persons and persons who show no clinical symptoms of COVID-19 after the seventh day. Employees in social and healthcare services were required to terminate isolation with a negative RT-PCR test result, but this has been proven unjustified, which is why this condition is omitted as opposed to the measure to date.

During epidemiological investigations, the regional public health authority determines the circumstances of contact between the person in whom COVID-19 disease was proven through laboratory examination. The circumstances affecting the intensity of the risk of such contact include the duration of contact, the use of protective respiratory equipment or distancing between the persons. When assessing the circumstances of contact, the regional public health authority proceeds pursuant to the Methodical Instruction of the Chief Hygienist of the Czech Republic for the unified procedure of regional public health authorities in deciding about the imposition of quarantine, dated 11 September 2020.

For reasons of adequate efficacy, quarantine is generally imposed for the maximum incubation period, which is not fulfilled in the case of this measure, because a number of cases have been documented of the development of first symptoms even 14 days after contact with the infected person. However, the epidemiological impacts of shortening the quarantine to 10 days are insignificant. It is apparent that by imposing a quarantine for 10 days, some cases may escape detection and the infected persons may continue to spread the disease, but these account for only 2.5% to 5%, which is acceptable in epidemiological terms with regard to the benefits in other areas brought about by decreasing the restriction of personal freedom of the affected persons. Moreover, these cases with a long incubation period have a lower ability to spread the virus around. Another practical, although minor reason for stipulating the ten-day quarantine period is to unify the minimum period of restricting personal freedom with isolation, so as to simplify the stipulated measures and avoid confusing the public.

Roman Prymula

Minister of Health

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