



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

Prague, 26 February 2021

Ref. No.: MZDR

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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:

Effective **from 12:00 a.m. on 1 March 2021 until** this Extraordinary Measure is **repealed**, all healthcare service providers in the fields of general practical medicine or pediatric practical medicine, all regional public health authorities and the City of Prague Public Health Authority are ordered to act to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic in that they **order isolation** within the meaning of Section 2(6) of Act No. 258/2000 Coll., lasting for at least 14 days after the day a diagnostic sample whose examination proved the presence of SARS-CoV-2 was taken, specifically:

1. for all persons that have a positive result on their RT-PCR test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2; and
2. for all persons that have a positive result on their POC antigen test for the presence of a SARS-CoV-2 antigen and are also showing COVID-19 symptoms;

(hereinafter a “Person Who Has Tested Positive”).

II.

Effective **from 12:00 a.m. on 1 March 2021 until** this Extraordinary Measure is **repealed**, all healthcare service providers in the fields of general practical medicine or pediatric practical medicine, all regional public health authorities and the City of Prague Public Health Authority are ordered to act to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic in that they **terminate isolation**:

1. after the passing of at least 14 days following the day a sample for a positive test was taken for persons who do not show any clinical symptoms of COVID-19, without performing an RT-PCR test;
2. in such a manner that 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 or if the lasting clinical symptoms can be explained otherwise; the total period of isolation must be no less than 14 days after the date of the sample for the positive test and shall be terminated without performing an RT-PCR test.

III.

Effective from 12:00 a.m. on 1 March 2021 until this Extraordinary Measure is **repealed**, all healthcare service providers in the fields of general practical medicine or pediatric practical medicine, all regional public health authorities and the City of Prague Public Health Authority are ordered to act to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic in that:

1. all persons who were identified as having been 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 14 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive;
2. a person that was ordered into quarantine will undergo, between the 5th and 7th day after the last contact with the person who tested positive, but no later than the 10th day, an RT-PCR test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2; a person that shares a common household with a person who has tested positive and cannot comply with the conditions of isolation in accordance with section 4 will undergo, between the 5th and 7th day after the first positive result of the person with which they share a common household, but no later than the 10th day, an RT-PCR test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2;
3. in the case of a negative result of the RT-PCR test and absence of clinical symptoms of COVID-19, quarantine may be terminated after 14 days;
4. in the event quarantine is ordered for a person sharing a common household with a person who has tested positive, where it is not possible to isolate the person who tested positive in a separate space in a common household, it is not possible to comply with distancing of at least 2 meters or there is physical contact with the person who has tested positive, quarantine is terminated no earlier than 21 days after the day the diagnostic sampling that proved the presence of SARS-CoV-2 was taken;
5. if the RT-PCR test exceptionally 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 14 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive;
6. if the clinical symptoms of COVID-19 appear in a person during a period of imposed quarantine, an RT-PCR test shall be conducted; if the imposed quarantine measure was only medical supervision, quarantine shall be imposed immediately after detecting clinical symptoms;
7. in the case of a positive RT-PCR test result performed under sections 2 or 6, isolation will be imposed pursuant to Art. I.

IV.

Effective from 12:00 a.m. on 1 March 2021 until this Extraordinary Measure is **repealed**, all healthcare service providers in the fields of general practical medicine or pediatric practical medicine, all regional public health authorities and the City of Prague Public Health Authority are ordered to act to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic in that they **will not order isolation in accordance with Section I** for persons that have undergone laboratory-confirmed

COVID-19 where the isolation period in accordance with an extraordinary measure of the Ministry of Health has ended and they are not showing any symptoms of COVID-19, in whose case no more than 90 days have passed from the first positive PCR-RT test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 virus or a POC antigen test for the presence of antigens to SARS-CoV-2 virus. Such facts will be proved with a medical report.

V.

Effective from 12:00 a.m. on 1 March 2021 until this Extraordinary Measure is repealed, all healthcare service providers in the fields of general practical medicine or pediatric practical medicine, all regional public health authorities and the City of Prague Public Health Authority are ordered to act to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic in that they **will not order quarantine in accordance with Section III**

1. for persons that have a certificate of the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic on vaccination against COVID-19, and at least 14 days have passed since the application of the second dose of a vaccine in the case of a two-dose scheme in accordance with the summary of product characteristics (hereinafter "SPC") or at least 14 days have passed since the application of the first dose of a vaccine in the case of a single-dose scheme in accordance with the SPC, and the vaccinated person is not showing any COVID-19 symptoms. In the event of the occurrence of COVID-19 symptoms in the next 14 days after the last close contact with a person who has tested positive, an RT-PCR test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 will be ordered and persons who test positive will be ordered into isolation in accordance with Section I;
2. for persons that have undergone a laboratory-confirmed instance of COVID-19 where the period of isolation in accordance with a valid extraordinary measure of the Ministry of Health has ended, that are not showing any COVID-19 symptoms, and after the first positive RT-PCR test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 or POC antigen test for the presence of a SARS-CoV-2 antigen no more than 90 days have passed. Such facts will be proved with a medical report.

VI.

Effective from 1 March 2021, the extraordinary measure of the Ministry of Health of 22 February 2021, Ref. No. MZDR 40555/2020/2/MIN/KAN, is cancelled.

VII.

This Extraordinary Measure takes effect on the date of its issue.

Rationale:

The spread of the new mutation of SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7 (the so-called British variant), which spreads 40-70% more easily and faster in the population, is one of the causes of the turnaround in the COVID-19 epidemic towards an increase in the number of new cases of the disease. The B.1.351 variant (the so-called South African variant) is spreading significantly in all of the

countries in the region of South Africa. According to data from the ECDC, apart from the Republic of South Africa, increased occurrence has also been confirmed in Botswana, Lesotho, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia. The ECDC also anticipates spread of this variant in other countries in the region. According to an assessment by the ECDC, the B.1.351 variant of the virus exhibits up to a 50% higher level of contagiousness and resistance, which means possible complications when applying existing vaccines - e.g., the Republic of South Africa has suspended vaccination using the vaccine by AstraZeneca due to it allegedly providing insufficient protection against the South African variant of the virus. The Austrian Federal Government has also decided on de facto closure of the federal state of Tyrol due to the spread of this variant. The spread of this variant has already been registered in 40 countries around the world. The P.1 variant (the so-called Brazilian variant) has so far been identified sporadically in 17 countries around the world. However, preliminary efforts at scanning samples confirm that the P.1 variant will probably also be more contagious than the original strain of the virus. The lack of information regarding the resistance of this virus, i.e., the effectiveness of the existing vaccines, seems problematic.

The determination of the length of isolation and quarantine is an essential part of the anti-epidemic measures. The usual length of quarantine and isolation for infectious diseases is the same as the incubation period. In the latest extraordinary measures in the area of rules for imposing and terminating isolation and quarantine, there was a shortening of the period of isolation and quarantine from 14 days to 10 days, this being on the basis of new findings about COVID-19, in order to optimize the ratio of the benefits of anti-epidemic measures relating 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 who tested positive based on the clinical image of COVID-19 can be expected, and consequently the decline of their infectiousness in the days after sampling. Approximately 10 days after this diagnostic sampling, it can be assumed that the majority of persons who tested positive who do not show any clinical symptoms of COVID-19 are probably 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 fourteen days of 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 and who subsequently showed new symptoms and tested positive again, virus capable of replication in cells was not detected.

On the basis of this information and in view of the information about the probable higher contagiousness of the new aforementioned variants of SARS-CoV-2, and on the basis of the valid recommendations by the ECDC, the decision was made to return to the original length of isolation in the same length as the quarantine, and in the case of People Who Have Tested Positive, isolation is ordered lasting 14 days from the date of diagnostic sampling for everybody.


During epidemiological investigations, the regional public health authority determines the circumstances of contact between the person in whom COVID-19 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 and distancing between the persons. When assessing the circumstances of contact, the regional public health authority proceeds pursuant to the Methodical Instruction of the Chief Public Health Officer of the Czech Republic for the unified procedure of regional public health authorities when deciding on the imposition of quarantine.

In order to ensure sufficient effectiveness, the quarantine is usually imposed for the maximum incubation period.

The incubation period represents the period between the entry of the infectious agent into the body and the first onset of the first clinical signs or symptoms of the COVID-19 disease. Sporadic cases of development of the first symptoms even after 14 days from contact with a person who is ill are rarely documented. The epidemiological impacts of a prolongation of the quarantine in excess of the minimum 14 days, however, are probably not significant. 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 same quarantine period is to unify the minimum period of restricting personal freedom with isolation, so as to simplify the stipulated measures for the public.

A group of persons on whom no quarantine or isolation need be imposed if they do not exhibit any symptoms of the COVID-19 disease is now determined on the basis of current scientific knowledge, this being due to the fact that they have either already had the disease, and it is anticipated that according to the current international recommendations by the ECDC and CDC, the level of antibodies which protect against reinfection in the majority of cases is sufficient in the period of 90 days from having caught the disease, or these persons were properly vaccinated with all of the required doses of the COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with the SPC. In the event such persons have COVID-19 symptoms, isolation or quarantine will be ordered for them.




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