



Laboratory guideline for patients who test positive for COVID-19:

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Most people (80%) infected with SARS-CoV-2 are well enough to be managed at home.

Patients with **mild disease** may self-isolate at home. The patient should have suitable facilities at home to enable self-isolation.

The criteria allowing home isolation are as follows:

Clinical criteria for patients >12 year of age

(for patients < 12 years of age, use age appropriate normal values)

SpO₂ > 95%

Respiratory rate < 25

HR < 120

Temperature 36 - 39°C

Normal mental status

Facilities to home isolate:

Separate bedroom to use for isolation

The patient **MUST** be able to access health care easily should deterioration occur.

The patient should not be at high risk of deterioration:

Age < 65 years co-morbid

Have no severe co-morbid pulmonary or cardiac disease

Should have no other co-morbid conditions.

Patients with more **severe disease** or **at risk** of severe disease need to be managed under clinical care, preferably in hospital. 15% of patients infected with this virus develop severe disease requiring clinical support (hypoxaemia, dyspnoea, tachypnoea). A further 5% will require critical care (respiratory failure, septic shock, multi-organ failure).



De-isolation criteria:

- If patients have mild disease, they may de-isolate after 14 days. **Repeat testing of these patients is not recommended.** They are regarded as non-infectious 14 days after onset of symptoms.
- If patients have severe disease, they may de-isolate 14 days after achieving clinical stability. **Repeat testing of these patients is not recommended.** They are regarded as non-infectious on completing the recommended period of clinical care and isolation.

In general, most patients diagnosed with COVID-19 continue to shed virus detectable on PCR testing for 7-12 days, and this period of time may be prolonged in those who are seriously ill. Detection of virus by PCR testing though does NOT equate with infectiousness. Studies using culture methods detecting viable infectious virus, have shown that patients are usually no longer infectious by day 8 of illness. It has been estimated that fewer than 5% **MAY** still be infectious at day 10. The guidelines therefore recommend 14 days of isolation to maximise the safety margin. This is why repeat PCR testing is not recommended in making decisions for patients to de-isolate and return to normal activities and to normal employment, and that the recommended isolation period is sufficient.

For detailed information on the clinical management of COVID-19 patients refer to the DOH and NICD guideline, available [here](#):