

Quarantine protocol for management of contacts of COVID-19 positive cases

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Preface

As of November 21st 2020, the quarantine period on Aruba has been reduced from 14 to 10 days. In this latest version of the quarantine protocol, an exception of quarantine is introduced for fully vaccinated individuals in addition to those who recently tested positive for COVID-19. The rationale for this adaptation is included in **Box 1**.

Protocol for contacts

THOSE LIVING IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD AS A COVID-19 POSITIVE PERSON

AND

ALL OTHER CLOSE CONTACTS¹ IDENTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

This can include partners, colleagues, people who may have visited like friends, a babysitter or anyone else providing in-home services (e.g. maid, caregiver, etc.).

- 10 days compulsory quarantine starting from the last contact with the positive person.
- Monitor symptoms closely during this period.
- At appearance of the slightest symptoms, stay home and contact general physician for testing.

Exceptions (for whom quarantine is not required)

1. Those who have tested positive for covid-19 within the past 6 months (<6months)²
2. Those who are fully vaccinated when contact with the positive case takes place

¹ Close contact: someone who has been within 1.5 meter for more than 15 minutes OR someone who has been within 1.5 meter for less than 15 minutes with a high-risk contact for infection (such as coughing, hugging and kissing) in the period from 2 days before symptom onset until isolation discontinuation, irrespective of whether the person with COVID-19 or the contact was wearing a mask. Source: <https://www.rivm.nl/coronavirus-covid-19/quarantaine-en-isolatie>

² [Protocol bron- en contactonderzoek COVID-19 | LCI richtlijnen \(rivm.nl\)](#)

3. Those who have experienced COVID-19 (confirmed by PCR test) and subsequently received one dose, even for 2-dose vaccines (only for those below 80 years old)³

Individuals are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer, AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine. Thus, these criteria should be met when contact with the positive case takes place for exemption to be granted. They have to be able to show the proof of vaccination or give the Department of Public Health permission to verify this in the Aruba Health App dashboard. Only FDA and EMA authorised vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Janssen) are recognized in Aruba.

Those exempted from the quarantine requirement, however, must monitor themselves for symptoms, strictly adhere to the preventive measures set forth by the Department of Public Health (social distancing, hand hygiene, mask use, etc.) and avoid/minimize close contact with unvaccinated older adults and persons with underlying risk factors⁴. Especially if living in the same household as a COVID-19 positive person (but infected within the past 3 months), one should regularly wash or clean their hands to reduce the risk of transmission through surfaces. If they develop symptoms, they should stay home and get tested (they can do so by requesting a code through arubacovid19.org/test). If positive, they will be treated as a new case.

ALL OTHER CONTACTS⁵

- If and where possible, self-quarantine for 10 days starting from the last contact with the positive person and monitor symptoms closely during this period⁶. At appearance of the slightest symptoms, stay home and contact general physician for testing.

Rules and conditions for safe and effective quarantine

- Those who are in mandatory quarantine must be placed in adequately ventilated, spacious single rooms with hand hygiene and toilet facilities.
- If single rooms are not available, beds should be placed at least 1 meter apart and a distance of at least 1 meter should be maintained from other household members at all times. NOTE: Adequate air ventilation is essential.
- Social distancing and hand and respiratory hygiene should be strictly adhered to at all times.
- Minimize the use of shared spaces and cutlery.
- Ensure that shared spaces such as the kitchen and bathroom are well ventilated.

³ [COVID-19-vaccinatie | LCI richtlijnen \(rivm.nl\)](https://www.rivm.nl/nl/COVID-19-vaccinatie)

⁴ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Interim guidance on the benefits of full vaccination against COVID-19 for transmission risks and implications for non-pharmaceutical interventions – 21 April 2021. ECDC: Stockholm; 2021.

⁵ More than 1,5 meter but in the same room for an extended period of time (≥ 1 hour).

⁶ These days are not covered by SvB. This can be done by coming to an agreement with employer, working from home or by taking holidays.

- Persons sharing a household with someone in mandatory quarantine may leave the house as long as there are no positive cases living in the same household and they adhere to the above-mentioned rules and the requirements.
- Older persons and those with comorbid conditions require special attention because of their increased risk for severe COVID-19.

Follow-up and control procedure for quarantined persons

- Follow-up of persons who are quarantined is conducted for the duration of the quarantine period. This is done by phone and includes monitoring of symptoms.
- Any person in quarantine who develops the slightest symptom at any point during the quarantine period is treated and managed as a suspected case of COVID-19 and will be referred for testing.
- In the case of violation of mandatory quarantine instructions, a fine can be imposed.

Box 1: Rationale for exempting fully vaccinated individuals from quarantine.

COVID-19 vaccines licensed for use have been shown during clinical trials to be highly effective in providing protection against symptomatic and severe COVID-19. Evidence from real-life usage of COVID-19 vaccines has confirmed these clinical trial findings and also showed high vaccine effectiveness against

PCR-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection⁷⁸⁹¹⁰. Limited evidence indicates that fully vaccinated individuals, if infected, may be less likely to transmit SARS-CoV-2 to their unvaccinated contacts¹¹¹²¹³. Uncertainty remains regarding the duration of protection in such cases, as well as possible protection against emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants. Although some studies have shown that the vaccines elicit lower levels of neutralizing antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 variants than against older, more common isolates, neutralization titers induced by vaccination are high, and even with a 6-fold decrease, serum can still effectively neutralize the virus. The data suggests that current vaccines could retain the ability to prevent hospitalizations and deaths, even in the face of decreased overall efficacy due to antigenic variation¹⁴.

⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p0329-COVID-19-Vaccines.html>

⁸ Hall, Victoria Jane and Foulkes, Sarah and Saei, Ayoub and Andrews, Nick and Oguti, Blanche and Charlett, Andre and Wellington, Edgar and Stowe, Julia and Gillson, Natalie and Atti, Ana and Islam, Jasmin and Karagiannis, Ioannis and Munro, Katie and Khawam, Jameel and Group, The SIREN Study and Chand, Meera A. and Brown, Colin and Ramsay, Mary E. and Bernal, Jamie Lopez and Hopkins, Susan, Effectiveness of BNT162b2 mRNA Vaccine Against Infection and COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage in Healthcare Workers in England, Multicentre Prospective Cohort Study (the SIREN Study). Available at

SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3790399> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3790399>

⁹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2777785>

¹⁰ Thompson MG, Burgess JL, Naleway AL, et al. Interim Estimates of Vaccine Effectiveness of BNT162b2 and mRNA-1273 COVID-19 Vaccines in Preventing SARS-CoV-2 Infection Among Health Care Personnel, First Responders, and Other Essential and Frontline Workers — Eight U.S. Locations, December 2020–March 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2021;70:495–500. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7013e3external> icon.

¹¹ Shah AS, Gribben C, Bishop J, Hanlon P, Caldwell D, Wood R, et al. Effect of vaccination on transmission of COVID-19: an observational study in healthcare workers and their households. *medRxiv* [Preprint]. 2021. DOI: 10.1101/2021.03.11.21253275. Available at: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.03.11.21253275v1>.

¹² Lipsitch M, Kahn R. Interpreting vaccine efficacy trial results for infection and transmission. *medRxiv* [Preprint]. 2021. DOI: 10.1101/2021.02.25.21252415. Available at: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.02.25.21252415v1>

¹³ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission from newly-infected individuals with documented previous infection or vaccination. 29 March 2021. ECDC: Stockholm, 2021.

¹⁴ Mascola JR, Graham BS, Fauci AS. SARS-CoV-2 Viral Variants—Tackling a Moving Target. *JAMA*. 2021;325(13):1261–1262. doi:10.1001/jama.2021.2088.