

Protocol for confirmed/suspect COVID-19 cases
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The rapid progress of the COVID-19 outbreak has had two consequences:

- i) It is no longer relevant to assign epidemiological significance to specific high-risks areas, as the whole of the EU is now considered a high-risk area.
- ii) Due to the increased volume of patients with respiratory symptoms, in certain Member States only patients with severe symptoms requiring hospitalisation are being tested (as it is the case for Belgium). Other patients with less severe symptoms might not be tested, even if they have symptoms compatible with COVID-19.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A CONFIRMED/SUSPECT CASE

Scenario 1 – **confirmed case** (laboratory test prescribed and performed by the national authorities)

You ora family member, if difficult for you, should:

- Contact the Medical Service and/or your line manager and if possible provide the following information: your name, your service, the date of the appearance of the symptoms, the list of colleagues or staff from other institutions with whom you were in close contact¹ since the appearance of the symptoms.

The Medical Service will be in touch with you to check your state of health and to provide assistance. We guarantee that all your personal data will be treated in accordance with the applicable data protection rules. In SYSPER, you will be put on sick-leave for the duration of your sickness.

Scenario 2 – **suspect case**:

- a) if you have been in close contact with a COVID-19 confirmed case and you are symptomatic;
OR
- b) if you develop acute upper or lower respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, fever > 38 °c, shortness of breath);

¹ A 'close contact' is defined by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control as:

- A person living in the same household as a COVID-19 case;
- A person who had direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case (e.g. shaking hands);
- A person who had unprotected, direct contact with the infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g. being coughed on, touching used paper tissues with their bare hand);
- A person who had face-to-face contact with a COVID-19 case, within 2 metres for 15 minutes or more;
- A person who was in a closed environment (e.g. a classroom, meeting room, hospital waiting room, etc.) with a COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or more and at a distance of less than 2 metres;
- A person providing direct care for a COVID-19 case, or laboratory workers handling specimens from a COVID-19 case without the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) or with a possible breach in the PPE;
- Sitting in an aircraft within two seats (in any direction) of the COVID-19 case.

You should:

- If the symptoms appear at home, remain at home in self-isolation.
- If the symptoms appear at work, leave the office ensuring no exposure of other colleagues.
 - Call your General Practitioner and the Medical Service immediately. If you don't have a General Practitioner to contact the Medical Service will provide you with a list of General Practitioners to contact. If you develop severe symptoms (particularly any difficulty in breathing), you must call 112. It will be for the national authorities to evaluate the case and decide if testing is needed.
 - If possible provide the following information to the Medical Service and/or your line manager: your name, your service, the date of the appearance of the symptoms, the list of colleagues or staff from other institutions with whom you were in close contact since the appearance of the symptoms. We guarantee that all your personal data will be treated in accordance with the applicable data protection rules. On SYSPER, you will be put on sick-leave for the duration of your sickness.

Please note that under scenario 1 and 2 you have the legal obligation under the Staff Regulations to inform the Medical Service of your condition.

WHAT TO DO ONCE YOU HAVE RECOVERED:

- If you are not tested but you are a suspect case, you may return to work once you have fully recovered but not earlier than 14 days after the last day on which you had symptoms. In this respect, you will need to contact the Medical Service and obtain their clearance.
- If the test is positive, you may return to work once you have fully recovered but not earlier than 14 days after the last day on which you had symptoms. In this respect, you will need to contact the Medical Service and obtain their clearance.
- If the test is negative, you may return to work, once you have fully recovered.

Throughout the period of implementation of the Guidelines on telework during the COVID-19 pandemic the following rules on resuming work will apply:

a) suspect case and confirmed case:

- you may resume telework in line with Guidelines on telework once you have fully recovered. If you have been identified as a staff member performing a critical task as defined in the Business Continuity Plan of your DG/Service/Office you may not come to the office earlier than 14 days after the last day on which you had symptoms. In this respect you will need to contact the Medical Service and obtain their clearance.

b) negative case:

- If the test is negative, you may resume work, in line with the Guidelines on telework, once you have fully recovered.

For help, contact:

Brussels Medical Service – HR-MAIL-D3@ec.europa.eu

Luxembourg Medical Service - HR-LUX-SERV-MEDICAL@ec.europa.eu

Ispra Medical Service – HR-ISP-MEDICAL-SERVICE@EC.EUROPA.EU

Commission Duty Office 24/7: +32 2 29 22222 which will direct you to a phone line in the Medical Service