

## COVID 19 HOME BASED CARE GUIDELINE

Omicron variant does spread quickly and this has a potential to put pressure on the health system. With the identification of this variant in Rwanda and the upsurge of case, a new guideline has been developed and underscores the need to tighten preventive measures by strongly encouraging people to be fully vaccinated, wear mask and get tested before attending any allowed gathering.



### New changes:

- I. The number of days to self-isolate for vaccinated people with COVID 19 has changed to a minimum of 7 days. Vaccinated people will end self-isolation after a minimum of 7 days if results from rapid or PCR are negative.
- II. People tested positive after recovering from COVID 19 (with a recovery certificate) are not requested to isolate



### Key message:

#### If you have COVID 19 symptoms or have received a positive COVID 19 result

- If you develop symptoms of COVID 19 get tested immediately, stay at home and self-isolate immediately.
- If you have positive test result but do not have symptoms, stay at home as soon as you receive positive result.
- If you leave home to seek medical care or testing site: wear a mask, **keep 2 meters distance**.
- Your isolation days include the day you tested positive.
- Self-Isolation for fully vaccinated people can be ended following a negative result taken on Day 7 (**You should not take a control test before 7 days**).
- Control test is mandatory for everyone to end the isolation.
- People who test positive and undertake 10 days of isolation but remain positive on PCR with CT values above 37, negative rapid diagnostic test and without any COVID19 symptoms will be given a recovery certificate through RBC portal, however:
  - ◊ Recovery certificate will not give exemptions for required COVID19 testing
  - ◊ Recovery certificate will be valid for 45 days, however will be invalid in case of new infection confirmed by positive rapid test or PCR with low CT values



## If you live in the same household with someone with COVID19:

- Close contacts with symptoms, whether vaccinated or not yet vaccinated should be immediately tested
- Close contacts without symptoms can be tested at Day 3.

### Tips for people with positive result

- Stay separate from other people and pets in your house.
- Do not share personal household items.
- Monitor your symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath.
- To reduce further transmission:
  - ◇ Wash hands frequently and cover coughs and sneezes.
  - ◇ Regularly clean touched surfaces.
  - ◇ Ventilate indoor area by opening the window



## What medications to take?

- The common flu medications can be used to relieve some mild symptoms such as acetaminophen/paracetamol, vitamin C, medications for relief of throat discomfort (i.e. strepsils losanges etc.), anti-decongestant (i.e. paidoterin syrup etc.) and cough mixtures (i.e. syrups of bronchalene, ascoril etc.).
- Be sure to follow directions of your Doctor and Pharmacist.
- Oral antibiotics might be prescribed by the medical team that is taking care of you, especially if fever is not resolving or if any concern that you might develop “pneumonia”.
- Antiviral drugs will be prescribed as needed by the healthcare provider at the clinic where you got tested (especially if you have symptoms), based on your health status parameters at baseline or during the follow-up time.



## What to drink and eat?

- It is very important to eat a well-balanced meal (with plenty fruits and vegetables) and drink sufficient amount of water (for an adult person: 2 – 3 liters of water every day).
- For the main course meals, please avoid cold drinks/food, or those that are hard to digest. Consider light and nutritious meals such as hot soups with meat proteins or with a mixture of fresh vegetables from your garden or local market.
- Food and drinks rich in vitamin C would be a great selection, such as lemon tea or fresh juice, with a tinge of the spicy tangawizi for those who would prefer and are used to take it.
- Avoid too much spice as it can cause stomach pain. You can also mix tea or hot milk with honey depending on your preferences. Although these hot beverages cannot

directly kill the virus, but we note that the overall gain is to relieve symptoms as you remain well hydrated and boost your immune system.



## Take care of yourself

- While you don't need to be in bed all times, you should get plenty of rest.
- Avoid overworking yourself. The consumption of alcohol and tobacco use are strictly prohibited, as they might worsen your disease and aggravate the severity.
- A moderate amount of stretching exercise and ambulation within the delimited and permitted area at home would be sufficient; a daily 30 min workout at least every day is good to keep you energized.



## Keep in contact with the health system

- It is very important to have at hand the telephone numbers of your local community healthcare worker (umujyanama w'ubuzima, CHW), Isibo and Cell leaders, as they are an integral part of COVID 19 response in Rwanda.
- It is very encouraged that you exchange news related to your illness on daily basis, and they might also be able to answer to all queries that you might have. Feel free to limit the number of follow-up phone calls you want to receive on daily basis.
- The COVID 19 care in Rwanda is now decentralized from the National level to the community level, and MoH/RBC are working closely with these structures that are close to your home to ensure you remain safe and recover from COVID 19 as quick as possible.
- You can also reach out to the National COVID 19 Rapid Response Team on 0784007124 or 0789198119 (all days), the COVID 19 Hotline 114 (all days)
- It is very important to report any unusual sign or symptom that might occur during your illness such as continuous fever, shortness of breath, worsening cough, chest pain or any serious discomfort that you may experience. If any alarming sign develops during the course of your illness, please call any of our COVID 19 hotlines and our field team composed of clinicians will reach out to you for an advanced assistance.
- We acknowledge that there are a lot of rumors related to COVID 19 disease that circulate freely on the internet, and we caution you against implementing any new measure that has not been advised and prescribed by our COVID 19 clinical team.
- Please consult regularly our RBC website ([www.rbc.gov.rw](http://www.rbc.gov.rw)) and Twitter handle (@RBCRwanda), as we will be posting new health tips and news regularly as science evolves. Our priority is to keep you safe.
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## Recovery from COVID19

- Since some people might still test positive on PCR after 10 days of isolation; MoH/RBC is availing a **COVID-19 recovery certificate** for individuals previously positive for COVID 19, who are now without symptoms, and at the end of 10 days of isolation, for whom the RT-PCR COVID 19 test continues to be positive.
- However, everyone using this certificate for travel purpose should take the necessary time to consult with the Airlines, countries of transit and countries of destination if this certificate would allow the travel to happen smoothly even if the RT-PCR test obtained before traveling was still positive for COVID 19.
- Travelers should also check if while in that specific country additional measures such as restricted movements or access to touristic areas, additional COVID 19 tests or quarantine time might be imposed.



## Testing and Education after testing:

- Testing should only take place from accredited facilities.
- We request health care providers to give test results before clients leave the testing facility/site.
- We request health care providers to give information related to isolation and prescribe medication after testing at site.