

Swissnoso Expert Consensus regarding additional flanking measures aligned with the shortened duration of isolation and quarantine measures due to COVID-19

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Based on the Federal Council's decision issued on 12th January, 2022, the duration of isolation due to COVID-19 will be reduced from 10 to 5 days with immediate effect, provided that the person tested positive has had no symptoms in the 48 hours beforehand. The quarantine period has also been limited to 5 days as of this date.

Based on the still preliminary data regarding the duration of infectivity of the Omicron variant, Swissnoso experts agreed to have an extra “safety layer” and propose additional precautionary measures to affected healthcare workers (HCW) at work in their hospital when resuming work after isolation.

1. Isolation measures should be applied according to the Federal regulations; exceptions can be made only in agreement with cantonal health authorities.

Only SARS-CoV-2 positive HCW without symptoms (or with a substantial decrease of symptoms) within the last 48 hours are allowed to resume work after 5 days of isolation.

Recommended flanking measures for HCW when resuming work after ending official isolation

- Taking meals/breaks alone until (and including) day 10 in rooms that can be ventilated (windows can be opened afterwards)
- Ensuring that contacts (including patients) always wear a mask as well
- Avoidance of crowded areas until (and including) day 10
- Consider wearing an FFP-2 mask (instead of a surgical mask) until (and including) day 10
- Avoid working with immunocompromised patients (if feasible)

2. Quarantine measures should be applied according to the Federal regulations for 5 days; exceptions can be made only in agreement with cantonal health authorities.

The majority of the Swissnoso experts believe that currently no additional flanking measures need to be taken despite the shortening of the quarantine. HCW can resume work on day 6 if no symptoms appear. However, they should

- Strictly respect barrier precautions (wear a mask at all times)
- Continue to carefully self-monitor for symptoms and test immediately if symptoms appear (preferably by PCR)
- Ensure that contact persons (including patients) also wear a mask at all times.

Measures may be adapted to the local epidemiology and situation.

Regarding measures for hospitalized patients, recommendations are still under discussion. At the moment, Swissnoso recommends referring to the existing guideline of 26 November 2021 (Vorsorgemassnahmen in Spitälern während der COVID-19 Pandemie, Version 9.4).