

HOME QUARANTINE IN COVID-19 & THE ROLE OF LOCAL BODIES ...

What is Quarantine?

Quarantine refers to separation of individuals who are not yet ill, but may have been exposed to COVID-19 and therefore have a potential to become ill. There will be voluntary home quarantine of *contacts* of suspect/confirmed cases; while there will be mandatory home quarantine for such persons who have travelled from COVID-19 affected areas (*other parts of the country or from abroad, where local and community transmission is evident*) as per the directions of the Authorities concerned.

What is meant by *contact* in the context of COVID – 19?

A contact is defined as a healthy person who has been in such association with an infected person or a contaminated environment and may have been exposed and is therefore at a higher risk of developing disease.

A contact in the context of COVID-19 is:

1. A person living in the same household as a COVID-19 case.
2. A person having had direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case or his/her infectious secretions without recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) or with a possible breach of PPE.
3. A person who was in a closed environment or had face to face contact with a COVID-19 case at a distance of within 1 metre including air travel.

What is Home Quarantine?

Home Quarantine means staying separately at home with minimum social/public interactions, for a minimum period of 14 days or earlier if a suspect case (*for whom he was a contact*) turns out to be negative on laboratory testing.

Who have to undergo Home Quarantine?

Home Quarantine is applicable to all such *contacts* of a suspect or confirmed case of COVID-19, including people who have travel history and persons coming from COVID-19 affected areas where local and community transmission is evident.

What should a person under Home Quarantine do?

1. Stay in a well-ventilated single-room preferably with an attached/separate toilet. If another family member needs to stay in the same room, it is advisable to maintain a distance of at least 1 meter between the two.
2. Need to stay away from elderly people, pregnant women, children and persons with co-morbidities within the household.

3. Restrict his movement within the house and should not venture out of the house.

4. Under no circumstances attend any social/religious gatherings etc.

(For detailed **Guidelines for Home Quarantine** please visit www.mohfw.gov.in)

What is the Role of Local Bodies to ensure that such persons follow Home Quarantine and adhere to the guidelines?

1. The house in which any member has been home quarantined will be prominently marked by the local Health Authority and the Ward Member must remain vigilant and in contact with such persons, so that they do not jump home quarantine.

2. Create a database of all such persons under home quarantine and their immediate family members, to enable quick communication and to attend to their needs, if any.

3. The Local Body representatives as well as the members of the Committee's of such Local Body should maintain vigil and monitor the movements of such persons in home quarantine. The other members of the household are also expected to maintain quarantine.

4. Since such persons are not able to move around or leave their home premises, each Ward Member should endeavour to arrange for their needs in terms of essential supplies, groceries, medicines etc.

5. The Local Body should carry out awareness within the local community in the immediate neighbourhood, on the importance of home quarantining and that the neighbourhood and the ward, should cooperate and not socially ostracize or stigmatise such persons or their family members. Any attempt to cause problems to such persons will invite action under provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

6. The Local Health Authorities will be in constant communication with such persons and enquire about their health conditions. In case of any information of adverse health conditions of such persons, the Ward Member should immediately report the matter to the local PHC/CHC/UHC.

7. The Local Body Members should keep track of any unknown person(s) / non-resident(s) arriving in the locality / ward for the purpose of residency; identify the premises where they are located and inform the Health / Police Authorities, so that they may carry out verification checks etc.

8. In the event any home quarantine person is found to be venturing out of the home premises, such person should be reported to the Police and Health Authorities immediately, for taking action to quarantine the entire family at a paid institutional quarantine facility.