



**衛生防護中心**  
Centre for Health Protection

**Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases  
and  
Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases**

**Updated Consensus Recommendations on Criteria for  
Releasing Confirmed COVID-19 Patients from Isolation  
(As of 4 August 2021)**

**Introduction**

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (SCEZD) under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (JSC), joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel (EAP), has reviewed the criteria for releasing confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) patients from isolation and made updated recommendations based on the prevailing scientific understandings on COVID-19. The revised recommendations supersede the previous one dated July 29, 2020.

2. The updated criteria for releasing a confirmed COVID-19 patient from isolation are as follows:

*For symptomatic patients*

- a) Clinical conditions improve and afebrile; **AND**
- b) Either one of the following laboratory criteria:



- With two clinical specimens of the same type\* (i.e. respiratory or stool) tested negative for nucleic acid of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) by reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) taken at least 24 hours apart; **OR** three clinical specimens of the same type\* taken at least 24 hours apart in which RT-PCR test results showed consistent Ct value 33 or above; **AND 10 days** have passed since the onset of illness; **OR**
- With a transition of the test results for SARS-CoV-2 IgG from negative to positive results with at least one PCR Ct value 33 or above.

*For patients who did not develop any COVID-19 compatible symptoms all along*

Either one of the following laboratory criteria:

- With two clinical specimens of the same type\* (i.e. respiratory or stool) tested negative for nucleic acid of SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR taken at least 24 hours apart; **OR** three clinical specimens of the same type\* taken at least 24 hours apart in which RT-PCR test results showed consistent Ct value 33 or above; **AND 10 days** after the first positive RT-PCR for SARS-CoV-2; **OR**
- Serology test result for SARS-CoV-2 IgG change from negative to positive with at least one PCR Ct value 33 or above.

## August 2021

*(Remarks: The footnote in blue was updated on 2 September 2021.)*

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\* For patient ever with stool specimen(s) tested positive, they should have two negative stool specimens collected 24 hours apart before release from isolation **OR three stool specimens taken at least 24 hours apart in which RT-PCR test results showed consistent Ct value 33 or above.**

## Annex

**Table 1: Summary table: Antibody response to RBD and NP after COVID-19 vaccination (Updated on 27 July 2021)**

Antibody response due to vaccination		Receptor-binding domain (RBD) IgG	Nucleocapsid protein (NP) IgG	Remark
<b>Natural infection</b>		Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NP are detected only after natural infection</li> </ul>
<b>COVID-19 vaccination</b>	<b>Inactivated</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sinovac<sup>#</sup>(CoronaVac)</li> <li>Sinopharm<sup>#</sup> / BIBP-CorV</li> </ul>	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A positive NP could indicate either <b>prior vaccination</b> or <b>prior infection</b></li> </ul>
	<b>mRNA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BioNTech<sup>#</sup> (BNT162b2)</li> <li>Moderna<sup>#</sup>(mRNA-1273)</li> </ul>	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A positive NP-based assay indicates <b>prior infection</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Viral vector</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AstraZeneca<sup>#</sup> (AZD1222)</li> <li>Serum Institute India<sup>#</sup> (Covishield)</li> <li>Janssen<sup>#</sup> (Ad26.COV2.S)</li> <li>Gamaleya (Sputnik V)</li> <li>CanSinoBio (Ad5-nCoV)</li> </ul>	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A positive NP-based assay indicates <b>prior infection</b></li> </ul>

### References:

<https://www.who.int/groups/strategic-advisory-group-of-experts-on-immunization/covid-19-materials>

<sup>#</sup> COVID-19 vaccines approved for use by the WHO