

Announcement by the Ministry of Health on the decisions of the Council of Ministers

Due to the increased transmissibility of the BA.4 and BA.5 variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, present in the community at a rate of 90%, the Minister of Health, Mr Michalis Hadjipantela, in consultation with the members of the Scientific Advisory Committee, has submitted proposals to the Council of Ministers for the review of protective measures regarding places of high risk and monitoring, in an effort to contain the spread of the virus and safeguard Public Health.

Consequently, the Council of Ministers has decided:

a) as of 18 July 2022, visits are allowed to patients in public and private hospitals, senior people's homes and closed structures, up to a maximum of 2 persons per day, upon presentation of a 24-hour valid Rapid Test or 48-hour valid PCR test, for persons over 6 years of age (1 person per visit).

- Testing units of the Ministry of Health will operate in public hospitals in all districts servicing patients, visitors and hospital staff, from 11:00 until 19:00.
- It is understood that in extremely urgent cases the number of persons and visits may increase, following approval by the management.

b) the extension of vaccination against COVID-19 with a 4th dose (2nd booster dose) with an mRNA vaccine, to persons with chronic underlying conditions including persons with:

- severe chronic respiratory disease,
- severe chronic cardiac and vascular disease,
- severe chronic kidney disease,
- severe chronic liver disease,
- severe chronic neurological disease,
- haemoglobinopathies,

given that a period of **five (5) months has elapsed since administration of**

the 3rd/booster dose. It is understood that the validity of the European Digital Covid Certificate (EUDCC – SafePass) is not affected in the event of non-administration of a 4th/booster dose.

c) the setting up of a Ministerial Committee, consisting of the Ministers of Health, Transport, Communication and Works, Labour, and Education, for the carrying out of research aiming at the installation of ventilation system in schools and other public buildings.

The Ministry of Health calls upon all citizens to comply with the **measures of personal protection (mask, distance, hand hygiene)** and recommends that all citizens, regardless of their vaccination case history, **undergo a self-test** before and after visiting crowded spaces, as well **as undergoing either a self-test or Rapid test** once a week.

13.07.2022