

# New Covid-19 finding could change discharge criteria

After 11 days, a person with Covid-19 is no longer infectious, although tests may still pick up the virus in his body, a local study has found. **Clara Chong** looks at how this finding could potentially allow many more patients to be discharged earlier, freeing up healthcare resources for testing and treatment.

## CURRENT DISCHARGE SYSTEM

Patients are discharged only after testing negative two times in a row over a period of 24 hours.

### Day 0

- Onset of symptoms.
- Infectious period of symptomatic individuals may begin around 2 days before the onset of symptoms.

### % of when patients are PCR (polymerase chain reaction) negative

30% by Day 15    68% by Day 21    88% by Day 28    95% by Day 33

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Note: Based on an analysis of 766 local patients (NCID data) and accumulated data since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## TIME-BASED SYSTEM

### Day 0

- Onset of symptoms.
- Infectious period of symptomatic individuals may begin around 2 days before the onset of symptoms.

Degree of viral shedding is very high in the first 7 days of symptoms.

Infectiousness diminishes after 7 to 10 days.

Virus cannot be isolated or cultured after Day 11 of illness.

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3

Week 4

Week 5

Note: Based on accumulated data since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## ABOUT THE VIRUS

### Median incubation period

(the time from infection till the onset of symptoms)

**Five days**

(Ranges from 2 to 14 days)

### Asymptomatic infection

(where a person does not have any symptoms despite being infected)

**17.9% to 78%**, according to different studies.

### Symptomatic cases

- **About 80%** have only mild symptoms and are relatively well.
- **15%** develop more severe disease (mainly pneumonia).
- **About 5%** may require critical care.

### Most common symptoms

Fever, dry cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, chills, sore throat, muscle aches, loss of smell, and headaches.