

Covid-19 and isolation measures: shortcomings to be corrected

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Despite the strong resurgence of the epidemic throughout France, partly linked to the high contagiousness of the Delta variant, and despite the imminent threat of the even more rapid spread of the Omicron variant, deemed to be much more transmissible, the barrier measures are less strictly observed in closed places where the cold season concentrates people. This loosens reflects a real feeling of weariness after a long period of constraints, but also a false sense of security among people who feel protected by vaccination.

Indeed, the occurrence of infections in well-vaccinated individuals has revealed the progressive decrease in vaccine efficacy against virus transmission, estimated at 50% with respect to the Delta variant six months after the second dose. These infections are most often asymptomatic or paucisymptomatic, usually undetected and unreported, but they increase the virus spread.

The highest incidence rates of infection are currently observed in the 6-10 year old children, indicating a high viral circulation among them at school and home settings. However, isolation measures for positive cases and contacts are seldom mentioned in health education campaigns and therefore not followed.

Keeping an infected child at home is a real headache for parents, who are poorly informed about the measures to follow to avoid intra-family contamination, especially since room-sharing by siblings is often inevitable. All relatives living in the same household must be considered as "contact cases", including those who are fully vaccinated; the whole family must be isolated at home.

Many parents are unaware of the specific barrier measures to be implemented in such circumstances.

In view of the expansion of viral circulation in the family environment in recent weeks, **the French National Academy of Medicine recalls** that measures to prevent the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 also apply at home by:

- respecting the usual barrier gestures (wearing a mask, washing hands, using disposable tissues, ventilating rooms several times a day, etc.);
- organizing the conditions for isolating children, without them being completely reclusive, but by avoiding gatherings such as birthday parties or "pajama parties";
- refraining from sharing everyday objects that cannot be systematically decontaminated, such as toys, soft toys, tablets, computers, remote controls, pencils and markers, etc.

The French National Academy of Medicine also recommends:

- to screen for infected children and contact cases in the family circle, by favoring PCR tests;
- to isolate the whole family living in the same household if one of its members is positive;
- to test all persons, vaccinated or not, in case of clinical signs, even moderate;

- to notify contact cases to be tested within 48 hours, which, for contact children, includes siblings;
- to repeat PCR tests 10 days later in infected people before allowing the return to school and to work.