

NEXT STEPS IN OUR TRANSITION TOWARDS COVID RESILIENCE

 **19TH AUG 2021**

The local COVID-19 situation has remained stable even as we eased our community measures on 10 August 2021. This was possible only because of strong public support and adherence to the safe management measures, robust and effective testing and tracing, and high vaccination rates.

Local Situation Update

2. Vaccination continues to be a key part of our efforts to keep the community situation under control. As of 17 August 2021, 77% of our population has completed their full regimen/ received two doses of COVID-19 vaccines, and 82% has received at least one dose. There is clear evidence that vaccination can significantly reduce severe illnesses and deaths. Among the infected cases, almost 9% of the unvaccinated needed intensive care or oxygen supplementation and around 1% were deceased, whereas only 1.3% and 0.1% respectively of the vaccinated did so. This is a substantial difference in terms of negative outcomes.

3. There has been a steady decline in cases since Phase 2 (Heightened Alert) was reintroduced on 22 July 2021. As of 17 August 2021, the number of new local cases has halved from an average of 123 cases per day about two weeks ago, to 63 cases per day in the past week. For the past two weeks, the number of cases that were isolated before detection has remained stable at around half of the total cases detected, while unlinked cases similarly remained stable at around a quarter of the total cases.

4. **Given the stable situation, we will continue as planned with the second step in the easing of community measures starting from 19 August 2021.** The easing involves mainly increasing the size of masked-on events and religious services, and will not have significant risk impact. Please refer to [Annex A](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-a-(3).pdf?sfvrsn=71b9a472_0) ([https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-a-\(3\).pdf?sfvrsn=71b9a472_0](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-a-(3).pdf?sfvrsn=71b9a472_0)) for the details¹.

Piloting Home Isolation as a Care Model for Fully Vaccinated COVID-19 Patients without Severe Symptoms

5. Our high vaccination rates also enable us to review our treatment and care model for COVID-19 patients. With much more local and global data showing that fully vaccinated COVID-19 patients have a much lower risk of developing severe disease, we are piloting a home-centric care model for the management of COVID-19 patients with mild or no symptoms, thus requiring minimal supportive care. However, they need to have a suitable home setting, where they can be isolated from the rest of their household.
6. The Ministry of Health (MOH) will pilot the Home Isolation model for medically stable COVID-19 patients from **30 August 2021**. We will start this initiative in a risk-calibrated, phased manner. The patients and their household members must both be fully vaccinated and must not belong to any vulnerable groups, such as the elderly or immunocompromised. This is in line with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the best practices of other developed countries. These patients will spend the first few days in a medical facility, before moving to home isolation. By then, the viral loads of vaccinated patients would have dropped.
7. During Home Isolation, the patients and their household members are required to remain in their place of residence, and this will be tracked through electronic monitoring and surveillance checks through phone calls. The patients will be closely monitored for their health and safety during this time and will be provided with access to 24/7 telemedicine services. They will also be subject to a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) swab on the ninth day of illness to determine if they could be discharged from isolation, provided their swab result is negative or if they carry a very low viral load. All household members will need to be fully-vaccinated, come under home quarantine, and also be placed on a daily Antigen Rapid Test (ART) testing regimen for early detection of potential infection.
8. We will closely monitor the pilot's outcomes, and study if more patients may benefit from this mode of recovery in a safe manner.

Opening our Borders Carefully for Incoming Travellers

9. On 6 August 2021, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce announced that border restrictions would be progressively reviewed to facilitate more travel when conditions allow. Our higher population vaccination rates now give us the foundation to introduce vaccination-differentiated border measures for travellers from countries/regions that have controlled the pandemic well and also vaccinated large parts of their population.
10. As a first step, we have reviewed the country/ region classifications for our border measures. Countries/ regions will be classified in one of four categories, each with differentiated border measures, premised on a traveller's 21-day travel history prior to their entry into

Singapore. If the traveller visits or transits through countries/ regions in different categories, the most stringent set of requirements among those countries/ regions will apply. The updated classification, together with the associated testing requirements, can be found in [Annex B](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-b-(1).pdf?sfvrsn=ca872413_0) ([https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-b-\(1\).pdf?sfvrsn=ca872413_0](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-b-(1).pdf?sfvrsn=ca872413_0)) and on the SafeTravel website (<https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg>).

a. Category I – Travellers from countries/ regions in this category can enter Singapore without having to serve a Stay-Home Notice (SHN). They will only be subject to an On-Arrival COVID-19 PCR² and if negative, will be allowed to go about their activities. This would include countries/regions such as Mainland China (excluding Jiangsu province), New Zealand and Taiwan today.

i. We have reviewed the COVID-19 situation in Hong Kong and Macao, and will also add them to this category from **20 August 2021, 2359 hours**. See [Annex C](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-c9a940239c78b4184a867f75cf70aa8b9.pdf?sfvrsn=aa1f4304_0) (https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-c9a940239c78b4184a867f75cf70aa8b9.pdf?sfvrsn=aa1f4304_0) for details.

b. Category II – Travellers from countries/ regions in this category will be required to undergo a 7-day SHN, which can be served at their accommodation of choice. Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents and Long-Term Pass Holders may serve their 7-day SHN at their place of residence, if conditions are suitable. Currently, only Mainland China (Jiangsu province) is in this category.

i. We have reviewed the COVID-19 situation in **Australia, Canada, and Germany**, and will add these countries/ regions to this category from **20 August 2021, 2359 hours**. We have also reviewed the COVID-19 situation in Brunei, and will place them in this category from **20 August 2021, 2359 hours** (see [Annex C](#)).

c. Category III – Unvaccinated travellers from countries/ regions in this category will be required to undergo a 14-day SHN at dedicated SHN facilities. Travellers who are fully vaccinated³ may apply to opt out of dedicated SHN facilities and serve their 14-day SHN at a suitable accommodation of their choice, if they fulfil the criteria in [Annex D](#) (https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-d9c2d7c581c864b128dc1207fc151a52d.pdf?sfvrsn=a0ab3767_0). Currently, Austria, Italy, Norway, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland are in this category.

i. We have reviewed the COVID-19 situation in Belgium, Denmark, Japan and Luxembourg, and will add these countries/ regions to this category from 20 August 2021, 2359 hrs.

d. Category IV – Travellers from all other countries/ regions (except Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, where entry is currently not allowed⁴) will be required to undergo a 14-day Stay-Home Notice (SHN) at dedicated SHN facilities. Travellers will also be required to comply with the testing regime as indicated in [Annex B](#).

Starting Vaccinated Travel Lanes

11. Beyond the above framework, we will implement a new Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) to facilitate fully vaccinated persons to travel into Singapore under reduced border measures. We will start pilot VTL arrangements with **Brunei** and **Germany**. In lieu of SHN, these vaccinated travellers under the VTL will undergo multiple COVID-19 PCR tests, including a pre-departure PCR test within 48 hours of their scheduled departure for Singapore, an on-arrival PCR test upon arriving in Singapore, and two additional PCR tests on Days 3 and 7 of their stay in Singapore (if they have not left yet).
12. The number of VTL travellers will be limited by available flights dedicated to the scheme. VTL travellers must also travel on non-stop designated flights to Singapore.
13. Prior to travelling to Singapore, short-term visitors and Long-Term Pass holders who wish to travel under the VTL will need to apply for a Vaccinated Travel Pass between 7 and 30 days before their intended date of entry into Singapore. **Applications for the VTP will start from 1 September 2021 for travel into Singapore from 8 September 2021.** Returning Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents who are vaccinated will automatically qualify and will not need to apply for the VTP in order to travel under the VTL. The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore will provide more details.
14. As the global situation evolves, we will continue to adjust our border measures in tandem with our roadmap to becoming a COVID resilient nation. Any changes to border measures will be updated on the SafeTravel website (<http://safetravel.ica.gov.sg>). Travellers are advised to visit the website to check the latest border measures for the associated country or region before entering Singapore.

Recognising Overseas Vaccinations with WHO EUL Vaccines for Vaccination-Differentiated Safe Management Measures

15. Currently, only Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents and Long-Term Pass holders with vaccination records in Singapore's National Immunisation Registry are eligible for vaccination-differentiated safe management measures. All other incoming travellers would have to obtain a negative pre-event test (PET) by an MOH-approved test provider that will be valid for a 24 hours, in order to be eligible for vaccination-differentiated safe management measures.
16. From **20 August 2021, 2359 hours**, the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) will issue a tamper-proof vaccination sticker ([Annex E \(https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-e87675e5a980645a5928863701a59c1ce.pdf?sfvrsn=7c611b31_0\)](https://www.moh.gov.sg/docs/librariesprovider5/pressroom/press-releases/annex-e87675e5a980645a5928863701a59c1ce.pdf?sfvrsn=7c611b31_0)) to be affixed onto the passport

of newly arrived travellers⁵ who were fully vaccinated overseas with a [WHO-Emergency Use Listing \(EUL\) vaccine](#), and who can furnish a valid, [English-language vaccination certificate](#). These travellers will be eligible for vaccination-differentiated safe management measures if they produce their passport with the valid tamper-proof sticker affixed. To obtain this sticker, travellers should produce their English-language vaccination certificates to ICA officers at the Singapore immigration checkpoints upon arrival. By September, the IT systems will also be enhanced so that travellers, upon verification of their eligible vaccination status at entry, will also be recognised by the SE Biz App through their TraceTogether Apps/Tokens to be eligible for vaccination-differentiated safe management measures without needing to go through PET.

Embarking on the Next Phase of our National Vaccination Programme

17. While a large proportion of our population is now vaccinated, we are planning ahead to ensure that our population continues to be well protected from COVID-19 and its new variants as they arise. The Expert Committee on COVID-19 Vaccination has been reviewing and monitoring the local and overseas data on vaccine boosters and is developing recommendations on Singapore's booster strategy.

18. The Expert Committee is also looking at the need to enhance the immune response of certain groups of individuals. This includes the severely immunocompromised who have a weaker immune response to vaccination despite completing a full vaccination regimen. For this group, there may be benefits in administering a third dose of the vaccine for them. The Expert Committee will make its recommendations shortly.

Working Together Towards COVID Resilience

19. Our high vaccination coverage has allowed us to ease some of our community measures and take significant steps towards a new normal of a COVID resilient nation. Yet, there are some, in particular our seniors, who can be vaccinated but have not done so. We urge them to walk into any of our vaccination centres to get vaccinated, so as to protect both themselves and their loved ones. It is only together, that we can emerge safer and stronger.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

19 AUGUST 2021

[1] There is no change from what was announced on 6 August 2021.

[2] To expedite the COVID-19 PCR test at the airport, travellers are strongly encouraged to register and pre-pay for their on-arrival COVID-19 PCR test prior to departing for Singapore at <https://safetravel.changiairport.com/>.

[3] An individual is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after he or she has received the full regimen of Pfizer-BioNTech/ Comirnaty, Moderna or other WHO EUL vaccines.

[4] Only Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents with travel history to Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are allowed entry into Singapore.

[5] These include Singapore Citizens, Permanent Residents, Long-Term Pass Holders (LTPH) and Short-Term Visit Pass holders from all countries/regions (i.e. Category I, II, III, IV).

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