



## CHANGE OF PROTOCOLS

# Health reduces days of isolation and vigilance to positive contacts

Delays in the delivery of TMA test results lead to an increase of 824 cases

Benazet points out that progress has been made on the formula for reducing the selling price of antigen tests

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The characteristics of the omicron variant have led to a new adjustment of the action around the pandemic. Health Minister Joan Martínez Benazet said yesterday that «as the incubation period with omicron is getting shorter, the protocols have been adjusted.» Specifically, the days of isolation and surveillance to be followed by people who are in contact with positives have been cut. This way, if the person has symptoms, they should confine themselves to an antigen test on a device - not a self-test. If it is negative, a TMA must be submitted immediately. And if this is also negative, those who are immunized will have to stay in passive surveillance for seven days - before there were 10 - while those who are not immunized will have to be

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isolated for four days - instead of seven - when they will have to do another TRA, which even if it is negative, will keep them under passive surveillance for three days.

If the contact has no symptoms and is vaccinated, an antigen test should be performed 48 hours after the match with the infected person, and should be kept under passive surveillance. If it is negative, it will have to stay under this surveillance for seven days - before it was 10 -. However, if the vaccine has not been received, the person should also be vaccinated after 48 hours, and in the meantime, should be isolated. If the result is negative, the contact must remain more isolated for four days - until now it was six -, and a second antigen test must be done, which in case of being negative, will allow them to break even, but keeping a passive surveillance



► The Minister of Health, Joan Martínez Benazet.

of three days.

more than 5,000 active cases / In relation to the epidemiological data, Benazet reported that in the last 24 hours 824 new positives had been confirmed, a high figure and that according to the minister «should be taken with caution», as well as all of the last days, by the delay in the delivery of the results fruit of the failure of one of the diagnostic machines of the laboratory. In fact, at the time of the appearance, there were still 988 tests pending update, although Benazet was confident that the situation would stabilize over the weekend. So, next week, the Ministry of Health will break down the results day by day, depending on when the sample was taken, to present a more reliable increase in daily infections.

In any case, this volume was an increase of 402 people in active ca-



**JOAN M. BENAZET**  
MINISTER OF HEALTH

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ses, which yesterday amounted to 5,009. Of these, eight were admitted to the Hospital Nostra Senyora de Meritxell: three on the ground floor and five in the ICU, all ventilated. This reduction, and the fact that all intensive care patients are infected with the delta variant, makes Benazet remark that «these are good figures and point to what we thought: the omicron variant is another covid, and has mutated as such the health impact is less». However, he acknowledged that its high transmissibility implies «very high social impact.»

As for the school population, there were 253 classrooms affected: 214 in active surveillance - 29 total and 185 partial - and 39 in passive. «We see once again that schools are the place where this wave is catching up with.» said the head of Health, who acknowledged that «it was predicta-

ble» but that we must pay this toll because we want to keep the education system open and attended». Regarding the vaccination campaign, the minister explained that 151,860 vaccines had already been inoculated, of which 37,157 were third doses. And to close the health data, Benazet stated that the registered discharges totaled 27,872, and 144 deaths from coronavirus

As a last resort, the minister noted that «a lot of progress is being made» in negotiations with pharmacies on limiting the selling price of antigen tests, and that «we believe that we have a formula that can be approved next week». A formula that would require its approval by decree and that «would facilitate very affordable prices.» It should be remembered that Spain just a week ago limited the prices of TRA to 2.94 euros per unit. ≡

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## OLYMPIC CANDIDACY

# Catalonia will hold a referendum in the Pyrenees on the Winter Games

75% of the population sees it as positive and the Generalitat states that Andorra «is an essential partner»

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This spring, the Generalitat de Catalunya will launch a popular consultation on the possibility of the Catalan Pyrenees hosting the 2030 Winter Olympics, whether or not to apply. If the result is positive, the will of the Catalan government is that Andorra should also be included and even cover the territory of Aragon and France. In this sense, and following an interview in the country's media, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Generalitat, Victòria Alsina, considered that the Principality is «an essential partner» in the project. «We are committed to an inclusive candidacy that takes into account all the actors in the Pyrenees,» Alsina said in a tweet.

It should also be remembered that the Principality has always been very present in this possibility; The Minister of the Presidency, Economy and Business, Jordi Gallardo, already declared last October at the 32nd Business Meeting

**The Principality has already shown on several occasions its willingness to be part of the project**

in the Pyrenees that «the Government has shown its willingness and desire» to form an Olympic candidacy. While acknowledging that the Principality will never be able to host a project of this nature alone, the President proposed the existing Andorran facilities for some disciplines, especially those related to snow. In fact, in the interview Alsina points out that Andorra is «a mountain country», referring to the organization of the finals of next year's Ski World Cup and also praises the economic infrastructure and current hotel and necessary for the proper functioning of some games.



► Some skiers descend to the slopes of Masella, in La Cerdanya.

The news of the spring referendum coincides with the publication of a survey showing that 74.6% of the citizens of the High Pyrenees and Aran believe that the holding of a Winter Olympics would be «interesting» for the Pyrenees, while 20.7% think otherwise. It states that 73.3% of Catalan society as a whole also consider the proposal to hold a Games in 2030 to be positive for the territory, and 68.1% believe that it would benefit the whole of Catalonia. Among the most valued aspects are the improvement of infrastructure, promotion, internationalization and job creation. As for the concerns it raises, they mention the economic cost, the environmental impact and the

**The main concerns of the citizens are the economic cost, the environmental impact and the legacy**

legacy that will remain.

The survey was conducted on 1,506 people, of whom 300 (one-fifth of the total) are residents of the Alt Pirineu and Aran vicariates. The action has been commissioned by the General Directorate of Analysis and Foresight, and has been carried out to know the needs of the territory, the perception, interest and knowledge about the project, as well as what opportunities and doubts identify. The poll was conducted between December 9th and 20th last year.

The end result shows that improving infrastructure is the main challenge for the Pyrenees. This is stated by 25% of the people from all over Catalonia who have been

consulted, and also by 34% of the people from the Alt Pirineu and Aran vicariates interviewed. The citizens of the Pyrenees add to the challenges the improvement of health services, the strengthening of leisure services, the improvement of public transport and the halt of depopulation or the aging of the population, as well as the creation of employment.

**HIGH KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROJECT** // In general, there is knowledge of the project of the 2030 Winter Olympics. 66% of Catalan society and 82% of citizens of the Pyrenees are aware of it. 64.4% of spontaneous opinions about the Games among Catalan society, and 61.7% among the citizens of the Alt Pirineu and Aran, are positive, according to the survey. The favorable aspects in general (47.1%) and the potential economic improvement (10.3%) stand out. The vast majority of the population consulted agree that they would contribute to increasing tourism and the visibility of the Pyrenees at an international level, especially in Aran, Pallars Jussà, Pallars Sobirà, Alta Ribagorça and Alt Urgell and La Cerdanya.

On the other hand, for the detractors of the project, the main reason for rejecting the Olympic event is the economic cost they would have (53% for Catalans and 55% for the people of the Pyrenees) and the fact of not being perceived as a priority. The creation of infrastructures that could be abandoned after the Games is the main risk perceived both by the territory (45%) and by Catalans in general (47%).

The environmental impact they could have been also one of the main concerns. Not having enough snow would be the second risk identified by 36% of those surveyed in the Pyrenees, and in the case of Catalonia as a whole, this fear has 31% of respondents. It also highlights society's concern that employment is precarious and temporary or that the tourism generated by the Games is unsustainable, according to RàdioSeu. ≡

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