



LaborNet No. 1124

Mandatory Preventative Social Distancing or Quarantine. Obesity. Parameter for inclusion in the at-risk group for Covid-19. Resolution No. 1643/2020 by the Department of Health

Dear All,

Resolution No. 1643 by the Department of Health has been issued on October 6, establishing that **people with obesity (BMI equal to or more than 35.0 kg/m²)** (Obesity Class 2 and 3) are included in the at-risk group, within the framework of the provisions of Section 1 of Executive Order No. 260/2020 and Section 3 of Resolution No. 627/2020 by the Department of Health, as amended by 1 of Resolution No. 1541/2020 by the Department of Health.

Remember that the Department of Health included people living with obesity in the at-risk group for Covid-19 under Resolution No. 1541/2020.

This Resolution stated that *“based on other countries' experience and the prevalence of cases, evidence shows that obesity is a factor that may increase the risk for getting COVID-19 or having severe illness”*.

Now overweight and obesity is defined by the Body Mass Index (BMI), a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters (kg/m²). But Resolution No. 1541 failed to provide a definition for the different existing classes of obesity, which caused concern about its application.

As a matter of fact, the World Health Organization defines overweight as having a BMI equal to or more than 25 kilograms per square meter, and obesity as a BMI of 30 or greater. It establishes different classes of obesity: Class 1: BMI 30.0-34.9 kg / m², Class 2: BMI 35.0-39.9 kg / m² and Class 3: BMI > 40 kg / m².

This classification identifying different classes of obesity –each of which having specific characteristics- should be recognized, discussed and treated in a different way, even in the framework of the COVID-19.

That is why the Resolution under analysis understands the importance of analyzing the characteristics and the existing types of obesity to determine which of them is a factor that may increase the risk of getting SARS-COV2 and having severe illness.

In this context, the Department of Health decides to include people living with obesity with BMI of 35kg/m² or greater (Obesity Class 2 and 3) only in the at-risk group under the provisions of Section 1 of Executive Order No. 260/2020 and Section 3 of Resolution No. 627/2020 by the Department of Health, as amended by Section 1 of Resolution No. 1541/2020 by the Department of Health.

Then “it is imperative to replace Section 3 of Resolution No. 627/2020 and include people with obesity in the at-risk group for Covid-19 as defined in the Resolution, in accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of Executive Order No. 260/2020”.

This Resolution means that it is crucial to make every effort to protect this population group, because in Argentina obesity is not considered a disease, but a "condition" or "risk factor", which may leave gaps in potential health care benefits. In fact, the Argentine Society for Nutrition (SAN, for its acronym in English) fights for its recognition as a disease.

Adults of any age with the following conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Chronic respiratory diseases: diaphragmatic hernia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD], congenital emphysema, bronchopulmonary dysplasia, chronic tracheostomy, bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis and moderate or severe asthma.
- Heart disease: heart failure, coronary heart disease, valve replacement, congenital heart disease and valvular heart disease.
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney failure on dialysis or expected to start dialysis within next six months.
- Immunocompromised state:
 - Congenital, functional or anatomic asplenia (including sickle cell anemia), and severe malnutrition.
 - HIV depending on the state (CD4 350 or detectable viral load).
- Use of immunosuppressive medication or corticosteroids in high doses (greater than 2 mg/kg/day of methylprednisolone or more than 20 mg/day or its equivalent for more than 14 days)
- Cancer and transplants:
 - Oncohematologic disease patients, up to six months after complete remission.
 - Solid organ tumor under treatment.
 - Solid organ transplant or bone marrow transplant.
- People with Disabilities having a disability certificate.

- Obesity.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information,

Best regards,

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