FAQ Coronavirus

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FAQ: Austria is testing

Opportunities for free testing

**Info**

Regular testing in Austria forms the main pillar in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In this way, infected persons without symptoms can be identified and isolated at an early stage, and chains of infection can be broken. The Austrian Federal Government has therefore decided to make free PCR and antigen tests for SARS-CoV-2 as widely accessible as possible for all citizens. Through this testing service, Austria is taking on a pioneering role worldwide.

You can register yourself under Österreich Testet (Austria is testing) or via the hotline 0800 220 330.

**Should I get tested if I have symptoms of COVID-19?**

If you have symptoms such as a cough, cold or shortness of breath, or have lost your sense of smell and taste, please contact your usual family doctor or the health hotline on 1450.

In some federal provinces (Bundesländer), there are separate testing facilities for persons with symptoms. Information on this can be found on the websites of the respective federal provinces.

**Where can I get tested for free if I don’t have any symptoms?**

In Austria, it is possible to get tested for free at test centres within all federal provinces and municipalities, at pharmacies as well as at participating companies. This diverse range of services is intended to ensure comprehensive coverage.
How do I get the test result?
You will receive the test result digitally in the form of a PDF or a printed copy on site. In addition, the result will also be sent to you electronically by means of a link. You will need to provide means of authentication to access the results given their nature (health-related data). The link to the result can be sent via SMS as well as via e-mail. You can select the desired sending method when you register. At present, you can receive the test results by showing a QR code when taking a test on a company site, at a pharmacy or at a test centre within any of the federal provinces. The QR code is only valid when presented with an ID card in order to ensure the test result is assigned to the correct person.

What do I do if I’m tested positive?
If you have tested positive, please self-quarantine as soon as possible and contact the health hotline on 1450 or your family doctor. In the event of a positive test result issued on a company site, the respective test managers must notify the health authorities.

To confirm the positive antigen test, a follow-up PCR test will normally be arranged.

Does the test result count as proof of entry testing and workplace testing?
Test results issued by test centres within any of the federal provinces and municipalities, or pharmacies, participating companies and schools – digital or analogue – count as proof of entry testing. They are valid – in the case of a negative result – for the next seven days as proof of participation in weekly mandatory workplace testing and can be presented to the employer upon request.

The test result of a free antigen self-test, for example from a pharmacy, cannot be used as such proof if it is recorded in an official data processing system of the federal provinces.

Opportunities for free testing offered at test centres within any of the federal provinces and municipalities
Test centres are run by the federal provinces and municipalities. At specific locations in cities and municipalities, it is possible to get tested on certain days of the week after registering electronically or by telephone. The times and days of the week offered by this testing service vary from test centre to test centre.

You can register yourself under Österreich Testet (Austria is testing) or via the hotline on 0800 220 330.

**Who can get tested at a test centre?**
All persons of school age or older can get tested for SARS-CoV-2 free of charge at test centres in Austria. People who are in Austria because of their work, studies or holidays are also allowed to get tested. Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

**What should I take with me to the test centre?**
Take your free test sheet with you, which you received after registering. This can be presented electronically or in printed form. The person is identified by means of a photo ID. In some federal provinces, it is also a requirement to show your e-card. You can find more detailed information on the registration pages of each of the federal provinces.

You must always take with you an FFP2 mask and wear the same.

**Can I cancel my appointment?**
It is possible to cancel a booked appointment at any time. You will find said function under the appointment link sent to you. A confirmation with your date of birth is required. If you have registered by telephone, please call again on 0800 220 330.

**Can I print out my test sheet more than once?**
It is possible to print out the sheet again at any time. You will find said function under the appointment link sent to you. A confirmation with your date of birth is required.
Why am I referred to the hotline when confirming the appointment link?
If the date of birth is entered incorrectly several times when requesting the test result, access will be denied for security reasons. To gain access to your test result again, please contact the hotline on 0800 220 330.

Opportunities for free testing offered at pharmacies

### Info

As of Monday, 8 February 2021, it is now possible to be tested for coronavirus free of charge in pharmacies throughout Austria by means of rapid antigen tests. This service is offered in around 900 Austrian pharmacies. You can find out which pharmacies carry out these tests when you register or directly on the website for the Austrian Chamber of Pharmacists.

You can register yourself under Österreich Testet (Austria is testing) or via the hotline on 0800 220 330.

### Who can get tested at a pharmacy?

Pharmacies perform free COVID-19 antigen tests only on symptom-free persons who have valid social insurance. If you have symptoms such as a cough, cold or shortness of breath, or have lost your sense of smell and taste, please contact your usual family doctor or the health hotline on 1450.

In some federal provinces (Bundesländer), there are separate testing facilities for persons with symptoms. Information on this can be found on the websites for the respective federal provinces.

### Can everyone receive free testing from pharmacies?

At present, the costs of getting tested for COVID-19 are only covered for insured persons of the umbrella organisation of social insurance (ÖGK – former regional health insurance funds, SVS-GW – Trade and Industry, SVS-LW – Agriculture, BVAEB-OEB – Civil Servants,
and BVAEB-EB – “Railways and Mining”) as well as for insured persons of KFA Vienna, KFA Graz, KFA Salzburg and the Upper Austrian teachers' health and accident insurance.

We are already working on a solution for persons insured by other health insurance funds. In the meantime, those concerned can take advantage of the free testing service provided at test centres within any of the federal provinces and municipalities.

Is getting tested at pharmacies also free of charge for persons with private insurance only?
Persons who have private insurance only must pay for the test themselves and can submit it to their insurance company for reimbursement.

How can I register for a free COVID-19 antigen test at a pharmacy?
Please book an appointment at the pharmacy of your choice: Register via Österreich Testet (Austria is testing) or via the free phone number 0800 220 330 every day from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm.

What do I need to bring with me to get tested at a pharmacy?
Take your e-card with you to your test appointment. This will be used for identification purposes.

Opportunities for free testing offered at various company sites

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<tr>
<td>The widespread use of rapid antigen tests is crucial to breaking chains of infection and therefore keeping infection rates low. For this reason, tests in business operations have been included in Austria's testing strategy. Companies with more than 50 employees are encouraged to set up their own test centres or facilities, as well as offer free rapid antigen and PCR tests. This helps to contain the coronavirus pandemic. Not only are they able to test their employees, but they can also offer free testing to persons outside their company, such as relatives,</td>
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customers and persons working at other companies. These tests are funded by the Austrian Federal Government.

Companies with fewer employees can have the tests carried out by doctors, rescue organisations, pharmacies or external service providers, as well as receive funding to cover the costs.

Registration takes place via the participating company.

Who carries out the testing at company sites?
At companies with more than 50 employees, the company doctor is responsible for testing. If they have fewer persons, the testing is carried out in cooperation with doctors, pharmacies, rescue services or companies. These are also responsible for drawing samples.

Can the company see my data?
Before processing the data, the data protection declaration must be signed by the persons getting tested. The companies are obliged to collect these.

Registering is also subject to the strict guidelines of the General Data Protection Regulation. All data collected, including the test result, are entered into the screening register, and the positive test results are also entered into the epidemiological reporting system.

Only company doctors and authorised medical staff have access to these test results. The employer can only see the anonymised overall figures, but not the data of the person who has been tested.

Is the company allowed to charge extra for testing?
As testing on a company’s site is a funded programme, the company is not allowed to charge extra. Testing is free.

I would also like to offer the option of testing in my company – where can I find all the information?
Free self-tests from pharmacies

Info

As of 1.3.2021, it is now possible to obtain up to five free self-tests per person per month. These can be obtained by persons aged 15 and over (cut-off date 1.1.2006) from all pharmacies participating in the programme. Another prerequisite for the distribution of free self-tests in pharmacies is a valid health insurance claim. You must present your e-card or provide your national insurance number when picking up the self-test. Persons without valid access to ELGA (electronic health records database) must also present a confirmation letter.

Self-testing provides an easily accessible additional method of testing to help contain the spread of the virus and prevent more persons from getting the COVID-19 disease. They are intended to be used by asymptomatic persons who wish to know the result, e.g. before visiting family. Since a test result can only ever serve as temporary evidence, the protective measures (keeping a minimum distance, wearing an FFP2 mask, etc.) must be consistently observed, even with a negative test result. This applies in particular to meeting up with members of a risk group.

For more information on how self-tests work and how to use them, refer to the FAQ on test types and proof of testing.

Where can citizens get information about the free self-tests from pharmacies?
The ELGA service line is available throughout Austria on 050 124 4411 on weekdays from Monday to Friday 07.00 to 19.00 for general questions about the free self-tests.

For more information please visit the ELGA home page https://www.elga.gv.at/faq/wissenswertes-zu-elga/.
Which pharmacies are giving out free self-tests?
Self-tests can generally be collected from all pharmacies participating in the programme. To ensure safe pick-up of the tests, we recommend you to contact your preferred pharmacy, either online or by phone.

How can persons without valid access to ELGA get hold of their free self-tests?
Persons without valid access to ELGA can fill out an application form at www.sozialversicherung.at/covidtests. If you have a valid health insurance claim, you will then receive a confirmation letter by post.

After presenting your confirmation letter at any public pharmacy, you will receive five free self-tests per month. Each set of tests handed out by the pharmacy is then noted by means of a stamp on this letter.

As the process was only launched on 20 April 2021, the first five free test kits can be redeemed up to and including 15 May 2021 if the application is submitted in April.

You can find out more on the ELGA home page https://www.elga.gv.at/faq/wissenswertes-zu-elga/.

Who is currently unable to obtain free self-tests?
Unfortunately, citizens who have already de-registered from the ELGA service completely or from the e-medication service (E-Medikation) are not able to benefit from this service. We are already working on a solution for all persons living in Austria.

I have already opted out of the ELGA service. If I sign up again, will I get free self-tests, and if so, starting from when?
Upon re-registering for the ELGA service, a prescription will be saved in the e-medication service (E-Medikation) on the first day of the next month, provided that the eligibility check is positive. “Retroactive” re-registration is not possible.
However, for as long as you do not have valid access to ELGA, you may have access to the free self-tests, provided you present the confirmation letter for persons without valid access to ELGA. You can fill out the application form www.sozialversicherung.at/covidtests. If your access status changes, you will automatically receive free self-tests as a person with valid access to ELGA in future. This will make the need for a confirmation letter obsolete.
FAQ: Types of tests and proof of testing

The ‘3 G’ rule

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<tr>
<td>The three G’s stand for evidence of a low epidemiological risk. A low epidemiological risk can be assumed for the following groups of people:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vaccinated persons (Geimpft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Persons tested negative (Getestet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Persons recovered from a past infection with COVID-19 (Genesen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The certificates for vaccinated and recovered persons and persons tested negative are equal in terms of their validity, but differ in their respective validity periods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For how long are proofs of negative testing for SARS-CoV-2 valid?

- Molecular biological test (e.g. PCR test): 72 hours from the time of sampling
- Antigen test of an authorised body (e.g. Austria is testing): 48 hours from the time of sampling
- Antigen self-test recorded in an official data processing system of the countries: 24 hours

For how long are medical confirmations and notices of quarantine valid?

A medical confirmation is valid for six months following a previous infection with SARS-CoV-2. This must have been proven with a molecular biological test (e.g. PCR test).

An official notice of quarantine is also valid for six months.
For how long is proof of neutralising antibodies valid?
Proof of a positive test for neutralising antibodies is valid for three months. It is possible to get tested again after this period.

From when and for how long is the vaccination certificate valid?
- Immunisation through two partial vaccinations:
  From day 22 after the first vaccination with an EMA-approved vaccine against SARS-CoV-2, the proof of vaccination is valid for three months. After receiving the second vaccination, the validity of the proof of vaccination is extended to nine months.
- Immunisation through one vaccination:
  From day 22 after vaccination with a single-dose SARS-CoV-2 vaccine approved by the EMA, proof of vaccination is valid for nine months.
- Immunisation through vaccination of recovered persons
  If a positive molecular test for SARS-CoV-2 was available at least 21 days prior to vaccination, or if evidence of neutralising antibodies is already available at the time of vaccination, proof of vaccination is valid for nine months from the time of first vaccination with an EMA-approved vaccine against SARS-CoV-2.

The Yellow Card, a vaccination card and a printout or a PDF (e.g. on a mobile phone) of the data from the e-vaccination certificate are valid as proof of vaccination.

Antigen tests

Info

A correctly performed antigen test enables us to detect viral antigens of SARS-CoV-2 within a short period of time (15 to 30 minutes). In contrast to PCR tests, antigen tests do not detect the genetic material of the virus, but its protein or protein shell.

Antigen tests can be distinguished on the basis of its circle of users:

- Antigen testing for use by healthcare professionals (drawing samples, evaluation and interpretation is carried out by healthcare professionals).
• Antigen testing for self-testing purposes (drawing samples, evaluation and interpretation is carried out by the person being tested). Information regarding antigen tests for self-testing purposes can be found further down this page.

**What is the correct procedure for antigen testing?**

Drawing a sample from the upper respiratory tract (e.g. nasopharyngeal swab) is a requirement for correct antigen testing. Information on sample collection can be found in the manufacturer’s instructions for the respective antigen test.

In contrast to molecular biological tests (such as PCR), no laboratory and therefore no laboratory physician is needed to analyse and interpret the results of antigen tests. Antigen tests should be performed under expert supervision to ensure correct interpretation. The result must be related to the test’s specifications, the patient’s signs and history of disease, as well as the pre-test probability.

Antigen tests for the purpose of self-testing are for personal information on infection status only.

**If the antigen test is positive, does an additional molecular biological test (e.g. PCR) have to be ordered?**

Yes. Positive antigen test results in healthy, asymptomatic persons who have not come into contact with an infected person must be confirmed with a molecular biological test.

Symptomatic or contact persons are excluded from this (CP1).

If there is an overload of official molecular biological testing capacities, confirmation by molecular biological testing may be omitted until further notice for a person who shows symptoms of disease (suspected case) and has a positive antigen test result. The antigen test result must be recorded in the Epidemiologisches Meldesystem (EMS; epidemiological reporting system).
Do I have to self-isolate in case of a positive antigen test result?
Yes. You are legally obliged to report positive antigen test results: a positive antigen test is considered a suspected COVID-19 case and must therefore be reported to the district administrative authority.

If there is a follow-up test by means of a molecular biological test (e.g. after a positive antigen test result for persons without symptoms), the person must, in any case, self-isolate until the subsequent molecular biological test becomes available. If the test result is positive, the person must quarantine for 14 days. If the test result is negative, the person may end their quarantine.

Does a negative antigen test mean a contact person (CP1) does not have to quarantine?
No. As with the molecular biological test, the antigen test only serves as temporary evidence. As the person may be in the incubation period, they still have to quarantine for 14 days from when they last came into contact with the person tested positive, even in the event of a negative test result. It is possible to end the quarantine period early with a negative test result from a molecular biological (e.g. PCR) test or antigen test no earlier than 10 days from when the person last came into contact with an infected person.

How much does an antigen test cost and where can I get it from?
In Austria, it is possible to get tested for free at a test centre within any of the provinces and municipalities, at participating pharmacies as well as participating companies. This diverse service provides low-threshold and free access to testing.

You can find out more information at FAQ Austria is testing.

How are samples drawn for the antigen tests?
Drawing a sample through the nose from the throat (nasopharyngeal swab) is considered to be the gold standard because experience has shown that a large amount of viral material is obtained using this method. However, there are other ways of drawing samples, e.g. via the mouth from the throat. The recommended method is always indicated in the manufacturer’s specifications included in the antigen test kit.
Molecular biological tests (e.g. PCR or LAMP tests)

**Info**

Indirect detection of SARS-CoV-2 is done via the virus genome or virus protein (antigen). According to scientific evidence and international recommendations, the gold standard for early diagnosis of an infection is direct pathogen detection by means of a quality-assured PCR method or other molecular biological methods.

**What is a PCR test?**

A PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test is a very sensitive molecular biological procedure that detects the genetic material of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the laboratory. It is used to detect a current SARS-CoV-2 infection. The test assesses the actual state, so it can produce different results within a few days. During PCR test procedures, the viral material is multiplied into several cycles to determine how much viral material was present at the beginning of the process. Because of this multiplication and laboratory evaluation, the result takes longer than with an antigen test. These highly sensitive tests are carried out in special laboratories.

PCR tests can detect the virus with high accuracy in the early phase of a SARS-CoV-2 infection – depending on the quality of the sample. A positive test result means that a person is infected with SARS-CoV-2.

You can download the Austrian Testing Strategy for SARS-CoV-2 here.

**What is a LAMP test?**

The so-called LAMP test (Loop-mediated Isothermal Amplification) is a molecular biological method that also directly detects the genetic material of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, but within a shorter period of time than a PCR test. The LAMP method does not require laboratory facilities and the analysis can be carried out on site in a suitable environment using the appropriate equipment. In terms of sensitivity, the LAMP method achieves similar values to a PCR test and can thus be used to support or relieve PCR tests. However, the significant disadvantage of this method is a much lower sample turnover compared to the PCR test.
How are samples drawn for molecular biological tests?
Drawing a sample through the nose from the throat (nasopharyngeal swab) is considered to be the gold standard because experience has shown that a large amount of viral material is obtained using this method. In the case of medical indications that preclude drawing a sample via the nose, the healthcare professional may instead draw a sample via the mouth from the throat (pharyngeal swab). Healthcare professionals can also carry out gargle or saliva tests.

Antibody tests

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<th>Info</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antibody tests check for the presence of antibodies in the blood. A positive antibody test means that the body has already produced antibodies (defence substances) in order to protect itself against the virus. Since antibodies are not formed until later in the course of infection, they can only be detected, on average, after about two weeks of infection. These tests are not suitable for early diagnosis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is an antibody test and how is it relevant to COVID-19?
Antibody tests check for the presence of antibodies in the blood.

There are essentially two methods for carrying out the test for antibodies:

- Extraction of blood by healthcare professionals and conducting the test on special test systems in a laboratory (e.g. ELISA test, neutralisation test).
- Rapid antibody tests, which can be carried out, for example, by extracting a drop of blood from the fingertip.

The challenge being that the antibody test has to accurately find the SARS-CoV-2-specific antibodies in the blood. Some tests may also show other antibodies from similar cold viruses, e.g. other human coronaviruses instead of SARS-CoV-2, and could therefore produce a false result.
It is essential to discuss the results of antibody tests, especially rapid flow tests, with a doctor, as medical expertise is required for correct interpretation.

Detecting neutralising antibodies after an already passed SARS-CoV-2 infection means a person is exempt from getting tested for three months. This does not apply to testing when entering into Austria. Testing for the detection of neutralising antibodies must be performed according to defined requirements.

**Which type of antibody test exempts me from getting tested for three months?**

Antibody tests used to detect neutralising antibodies must meet the specific requirements. This includes, among other things, that the laboratory carrying out the test confirms a sufficient correlation with a neutralisation test for the test kit used. Detecting neutralising antibodies, for which the laboratory confirms that the defined requirements have been fulfilled, exempts persons from getting tested for three months (entry to Austria is exempted).

You can find out more information in the specification on “Detecting neutralising antibodies.”

**Self-tests**

**Info**

Self-administered antigen tests (so-called “self-tests”) are an easily accessible additional way to reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and prevent more persons from getting the COVID-19 disease. They are intended to be used by asymptomatic persons who wish to know the result, e.g. before visiting family. For this reason, it is important that the protective measures (keeping a minimum distance, wearing an FFP2 mask, etc.) are consistently observed, even if the test result is negative. This applies in particular to meeting up with members of the risk group.

Self-tests are particularly suitable for detecting a high viral load. This means that people are very contagious.
Information on the free self-tests can be found in the FAQ Austria is testing.

In case of COVID-19-related symptoms, inform the health hotline 1450 immediately.

**What types of self-tests are there?**
There are two types of test that may be currently used by laypersons.

- Tests with self-collection (“self-collection kits”): The layperson only takes the sample material themselves and sends it to a laboratory that carries out the evaluation and interpretation of the result for them, e.g. gargle tests.
- Tests for self-administration (“self-tests”): The layperson conducts the drawing of samples, evaluation and interpretation of the result themselves, e.g. antigen self-test from the pharmacy.

The Austrian Federal Office for Safety in Health Care (BASG) has published a list of tests that may currently be used in Austria without a medical professional (self-administered testing). You can find these on the website for the [Austrian Federal Office for Safety in Health Care](https://www.basg.gv.at).

**How can I take a self-test?**
Certain rapid antigen tests have been approved for use by laypersons. However, before taking the self-test, read the instructions for use carefully.

**What should I do if I’m tested positive? Do I have to report it?**
You must report a positive result to the health hotline on 1450. The staff will let you know where you can get re-tested at sites closest to you or they will directly initiate such re-testing themselves. You should take the test again within 48 hours. Until you have received a result from the re-test, you must immediately go into self-isolation. Ideally, you should also inform those with whom you came into contact within the last 48 hours.
Is a negative self-test result, within the framework of workplace testing, valid as proof of entry testing or proof of testing when travelling to Austria?
No. The self-test result is for personal information and well-being only. Self-tests provide quick and low-threshold information about a person’s own infection status and are therefore an important addition to the testing strategy. However, as it is not possible to check whether the test was carried out correctly and who carried out the test, a negative self-test result cannot be recognised in the context of workplace testing or as proof of entry testing. Self-tests can’t be used as proof of the right of entry into Austria.

Testing in schools

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<tr>
<td>Antigen self-tests for all pupils (so-called “school or nose-picking tests”) enable a gradual return to in-classroom teaching. By carrying out this testing procedure regularly, it is possible to further increase safety at school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Testing at schools is done in the form of a rapid antigen test for self-testing purposes and has two key advantages: Firstly, the swab only needs to be inserted into the front of the nasal cavity and does not require a nasopharyngeal swab. Secondly, the result appears after 15 minutes. Like other rapid tests, the self-test is particularly suitable for identifying persons with a high viral load. This means that persons who are very contagious can be quickly identified and go into isolation as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which tests are given out to the pupils?
The Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research is responsible for procurement and distribution. You can find all information on the BMBFW homepage. Antigen self-tests for all pupils – result in only 15 minutes (bmbfw.gv.at).

Why are pupils tested three times a week, but teachers only once?
The course of the disease in children is usually mild to asymptomatic, therefore it is necessary to test children regularly to detect any infections in due time.
Teachers are required to undergo a weekly workplace test in accordance with the COVID-19 Reopening Regulation. A school test (self-test) would also be valid in this case. In addition, they can use a school test (self-test) for personal clarification at any time at their own discretion.

**Can I go to the hairdresser as a pupil with a negative school test?**
Yes. A negative school test counts as proof of entry testing.

For children up to the age of ten, the immunity status of the parents or a legal guardian applies. Children older than ten must provide their own test result.

**Are teaching staff also allowed to be tested with the school tests?**
Yes. Self-administered tests provide an easily accessible additional testing option to help contain the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and prevent more persons from getting the COVID-19 disease.

The school test also counts as proof of weekly mandatory testing in the course of workplace testing.

**Medical certificate and proof of testing**

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<tr>
<td>Regular testing is an important part of controlling the pandemic. For example, entry into Austria, access to close contact services, or the unrestricted activity of some occupational groups is only possible upon presentation of a negative test result. This can be done by means of a medical certificate (e.g. available in Annex C <a href="https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/ii/2020/445/ANL3/NOR40231306">https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/ii/2020/445/ANL3/NOR40231306</a> or D <a href="https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/ii/2020/445/ANL4/NOR40231307">https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/eli/bgbl/ii/2020/445/ANL4/NOR40231307</a> of the Entry Regulation) or proof of a negative molecular biological or antigen test issued in German or English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Who is allowed to issue proof of testing?
For information on who may issue a test certificate, see the Updated Information on the Issue of Certificates in Connection with COVID-19 Testing [https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:cfd37880-a366-439b-85e7-945954c93f9c/Aktualisierte_Information_ueber_die_Ausstellung_von_Nachweisen_im_Zusammenhang_mit_COVID-19-Testungen.pdf](https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:cfd37880-a366-439b-85e7-945954c93f9c/Aktualisierte_Information_ueber_die_Ausstellung_von_Nachweisen_im_Zusammenhang_mit_COVID-19-Testungen.pdf) (PDF, 95 KB). This includes, for example:

- test centres and testing services offered by the different federal provinces and municipalities,
- pharmacies,
- laboratories,
- doctors,
- companies - but only if the tests are carried out by appropriately qualified and authorised healthcare professionals,
- schools (as regards staff, pupils and students).

Which information must a proof of testing contain?
The test result shall certify that the listed person has tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 by molecular biological or antigen test and shall include at least the following data:

- first and last name of the person being tested,
- date of birth,
- period of validity of proof and
- barcode or QR code (exception: school tests).

What do I have to do if my test result is not available in German or English?
In that case, you must take with you a medical certificate in German or English in accordance with Annexes C or D.
**Info**

A QR code appears on the test result, therefore enabling a digital review to be carried out for proof of entry testing for close contact services as well as proof of workplace testing, therefore saving a lot of time. By querying the QR code, you can read the validity status of the test in question at any time.

- Green = valid for entry and workplace testing,
- Yellow = valid for workplace testing only,
- Red = no longer valid

The QR code is only valid together with a photo ID to ensure correct assignment of the test result to the person.

For entry testing, the validity period of the QR code varies according to the test method. If the test is taken by means of a molecular biological test (e.g. PCR), it is valid for 72 hours. If the test is taken by means of an antigen test, it is valid for 48 hours. The period of validity for workplace testing, which is one week for both test methods, deviates from this.

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**Does every test result come with a QR code?**

We are in the process of connecting all test facilities in Austria. At present, the test results from the workplace tests in companies with more than 50 employees, pharmacies and test centres in the federal provinces, have already been integrated. If a QR code has already been issued, they can find out from the staff on site or on the website for the test centre.

**Who saves my data?**

The results from molecular biology tests and antigen tests are sensitive health data. Once the QR code has been scanned, the initials and year of birth of the person who has been tested are then transferred. As a result of this, in addition to showing the QR code, you will always be required to present identification with a photo ID.
Where can I get such a code from?
You can currently get the test results, including the QR code, from company sites with more than 50 employees, pharmacies and test centres within any of the federal provinces.

You can find information on the free testing options in FAQ Austria is testing.
FAQ: Health, care and risk group

Info
The information shown below generally applies to all of Austria. However, the legal provisions and measures introduced in the different federal provinces and districts may differ. You can find information about your region under FAQ: Measures introduced in the different provinces and districts.

Health care and services

Info
Even in the current health crisis, preventive healthcare and provision of healthcare play a crucial role. In addition to COVID-19, there are many other diseases whose treatment must be ensured in order to prevent our healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed, as well as to guarantee optimal healthcare for the Austrian population.

Protective measures enacted by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection help to reduce the rate of new infections in the field of healthcare services as much as possible. Health care services are necessary and therefore permitted, even in times of an acute pandemic, and are exempt from the entry testing requirement. The respective operators of healthcare facilities may, however, stipulate stricter measures for the protection of patients within the framework of house rules.

Which rules apply when visiting a doctor?
Visits to the doctor are permitted – even when a curfew has been imposed – as they serve to cover necessary basic needs. This also includes routine and preventive examinations.
(e.g. health check-ups, mammograms, etc.). We recommend you to set up an appointment.

When visiting, please be aware of the following:

- Keep a minimum distance of at least two metres from persons who do not live in the same household, and
- Wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask of an equivalent or higher standard).

For the duration of the pandemic, it is possible to take sick leave or have medication prescribed without seeing a doctor. The prescription of medication works via the service at SHI-accredited doctors who are connected to the ELGA e-medication system (for others e.g.: by fax to the pharmacy). In order to have medication prescribed, simply contact your SHI-accredited doctor. The prescription will be issued as normal and the information transmitted electronically to the pharmacy. The required medication can be collected without a physical prescription. You can find detailed information at chipkarte.at https://www.chipkarte.at/cdscontent/?contentid=10007.678532&portal=ecardportal.

**Which rules apply when visiting hospitals, convalescent homes, rehabilitation centres, sanatoria and other places where health services are provided?**

Patients can be visited by one visitor per patient per day.

For the duration of the visit, please note the following:

- The ‘3 G’ rule – this refers to all those who have either been vaccinated, have recovered from a past COVID-19 infection, or have proof of a negative test,
- Keep a minimum distance of two metres from persons who do not live in the same household, and
- Wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask of an equivalent or higher standard).

Minors and patients in need of support may be accompanied or visited by an additional two persons (e.g. parents and sister/brother).

Persons accompanying an individual to their pregnancy examinations and childbirth, as well as palliative or hospice care, are also exempt from complying with this rule.
Which regulations apply to healthcare services (e.g. physiotherapy, curative massage, psychotherapy, speech therapy)?

The following applies to the use of healthcare services:

- Keep a minimum distance of two metres from persons who do not live in the same household, and
- Wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask of an equivalent or higher standard).

If you cannot maintain the minimum distance of two metres (from anyone living in the same household) and/or wear an FFP2 mask, the risk of infection must be reduced in an alternative way. Further protective measures, such as the installation of partitions or plexiglass walls, must then be taken.

Speech therapists and their patients are exempt from wearing a mask whilst they are working. The recognition of facial features and facial expressions is essential for successful treatments in speech therapy.

Care

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<tr>
<td>Persons in need of care are particularly at risk in the pandemic. The risk of a severe course of disease in case of infection with SARS-CoV-2 is significantly increased, therefore, this group of persons must be protected in the best possible way.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety answers questions about COVID-19 and care on 0800 555 621 as well as on their website.

How do you look after the mental health of older persons and care for patients with dementia in the best possible way?

You can find guidance for carers in the Guidance for carers of older persons.

You can find information and drop-in centres for the care of persons with dementia on the web page Demenzstrategie.at.
**Which regulations apply when visiting old people’s and nursing homes?**

When visiting old people’s and nursing homes, the following applies:

- Adhere to the ‘3 G’ rule,
- Keep a minimum distance of two metres from persons who do not live in the same household, and
- Wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask of an equivalent or higher standard).

Maximum of three persons per day (except for palliative and hospice care and pastoral care). However, old people’s and nursing homes may also prescribe stricter rules for visitors in their respective house rules, but the number of visitors specified in the regulation may not be exceeded.

In addition, a maximum of two persons per day and resident are allowed to enter the old people’s or nursing home for regular support and care tasks. It is possible for external providers to provide non-medical services at any time.

For palliative and hospice care visits, pastoral care, accompaniment during critical life events and for regular support services, it is a requirement to be tested at least every three days. In addition, an FFP2 mask (or a mask of an equivalent or higher standard) must be worn at all times.

**Who will look after me if my carer (such as relatives, mobile care service, 24-hour personal care) cannot come?**

Should caregivers and carers be absent due to SARS-CoV-2, telephone care hotlines have been set up by the following federal provinces.

Please contact the responsible office for your federal province on the following number:

- Burgenland:  
  - Care advice: 05 7600 1000
- Carinthia:  
  - Care hotline: 05 05 36 22 134
- Lower Austria:  
  - Care hotline 02 742 9005-9095
- Upper Austria:  
  - Hotline (Caritas) 05 1775-775
• Salzburg:
  – Salzburg care advice: 0662 80 42 3533
• Styria:
  – Social service centre: 0800 500 176
• Tyrol:
  – Coronavirus hotline: 0800 80 80 30
• Vorarlberg:
  – Hotline for general questions: 05 574 511-24 105
• Vienna:
  – Fonds Soziales Wien (Vienna Social Fund) advice service: 01 24 5 24

**How does the pandemic affect funding for 24-hour care?**

If, due to absences, a self-employed caregiver has to extend their normal working rhythm of 14 days, only one caregiver will provide care. The subsidy is generally granted per caregiver and can be funded with 275,– EUR for one self-employed caregiver and 550,– EUR for two self-employed caregivers.

For the duration of the pandemic: In order to avoid financial hardship, the self-employed caregiver will receive a subsidy increased to 550,– EUR once they have provided extended care for at least 14 days. A dependent care worker may not work for more than 14 days, therefore the amount of funding does not change.

**Risk groups**

**Info**

The risk of severe disease progression due to SARS-CoV-2 is significantly higher among persons with pre-existing conditions. In order to protect this group of persons in the best possible way, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, together with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, the Austrian Medical Chamber and the National Insurance Fund, have drawn up a list of indications for a certificate proving a person belongs to a COVID-19 risk group in the **COVID-19 Risk Group Regulation**. The protective measures can be a change in working conditions, working from home or even a leave of absence.
The adopted regulation is valid for the time being until 31 May 2021.

How are those who have received a certificate proving they belong to a risk group protected?
Employers and the persons concerned must jointly consider which special protective measures are necessary and feasible to introduce at the workplace. If possible, employees should work from home. There is a right to a leave of absence if it is not possible to introduce these protective measures for employees working from home or at the workplace.

You can find more information on the homepage for the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour.

Which persons belong to the COVID-19 risk group?
The main medical indications are:

- advanced chronic lung disease requiring sustained dual medication to be taken on a daily basis,
- chronic heart diseases with end organ damage that require permanent therapy, such as ischaemic heart disease and cardiac insufficiency,
- active cancers with oncological pharmacotherapy (chemotherapy, biologics) and/or radiotherapy conducted within the last six months, as well as metastatic cancers even without ongoing therapy,
- diseases that need to be treated with immunosuppression,
- advanced chronic kidney diseases,
- chronic liver diseases with organ remodelling and decompensated liver cirrhosis from the Child-Pugh score class B,
- extreme obesity in class 3 with a BMI >= 40,
- diabetes mellitus,
- arterial hypertension with existing end organ damage, especially chronic cardiac or kidney failure, or uncontrollable blood pressure adjustment.

In addition, other similarly severe diseases with functional or physical limitations may also justify special protection by means of a medical certificate proving a person belongs to the COVID-19 risk group.
How do I know if I belong to the risk group?
Most of the persons concerned have been identified via corresponding medication to be taken. These persons have therefore already been informed in writing by their social insurance company.

If this has not been done, persons awaiting proof can register with their family doctor for an individual risk analysis. This is carried out together with the patient. If there is a severe underlying illness that meets these recommendations, a certificate proving a person belongs to the COVID-19 risk group, will be issued.
Info

The information shown below generally applies to all of Austria. However, the legal provisions and measures introduced in the different federal provinces and districts may differ. You can find information about your region under FAQ: Measures in the provinces and districts.

Food and drink

Info

It is now possible to pick up food and drink, enter catering establishments and consume on site. The maximum opening hours are from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm.

You can find information on current measures as well as guidelines for catering companies at www.sichere-gastfreundschaft.at (Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism, Austrian Economic Chambers).

Which measures apply to catering companies?
Due to the current epidemiological situation, the following rules apply when visiting catering establishments:

• ‘3 G’ rule – this refers to all those who have either been vaccinated, have recovered from a past COVID-19 infection, or have proof of a negative test
• Wear an FFP2 mask in enclosed spaces outside the assigned seating area
• Groups of guests of up to four persons from different households plus a maximum of six underage children are allowed to meet in enclosed rooms. Groups of guests of up to ten persons from different households plus a maximum of ten underage children
are allowed to meet outside. If the entire group of guests consists of only one house-
hold, this maximum number may be exceeded.
- You may only consume food and drink at your table.
- Keep a minimum distance of two metres between persons at different tables.
You must wear an FFP2 mask when picking up food and beverages. It is not permitted to
collect alcoholic beverages not contained within a can or bottle. Food or drink may not be
consumed on site or within a radius of 50 metres to a catering company between 10:00
pm and 5:00 am.

Operators must draw up a COVID-19 prevention concept and appoint a COVID-19 officer.

How many people are allowed to visit a catering establishment together?
Groups of up to four persons with no more than six children that need to be supervised
(4+6) are allowed to meet in enclosed rooms.

Groups of up to ten persons with no more than ten children that need to be supervised
(10+10) are allowed to meet outside at catering establishments.

If a group of guests consists exclusively of persons from one household, these numbers
may be exceeded.

Which rules apply to food stands?
Food and drink may also be consumed standing up at serving points, but not in the imme-
diate vicinity of the serving point. Closing time is at 10:00 pm.

Adhering to the ‘3 G’ rule is not a requirement for visiting a food stand.

Accommodation

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<tr>
<td>You can find current measures as well as guidelines for accommodation establishments at <a href="http://www.sichere-gastfreundschaft.at/beherbergung/">www.sichere-gastfreundschaft.at/beherbergung/</a> (Austrian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which rules apply when staying in hotels and accommodation establishments?

- You must adhere to the ‘3 G’ rule when entering for the first time,
- The rules for catering establishments apply for using culinary services provided in hotels and accommodation establishments,
- The ‘3 G’ rule must be observed for all services relating to catering, wellness and fitness,
- In the generally accessible areas, keep a minimum distance of two metres to persons who do not live in the same household,
- Wear an FFP2 mask in enclosed rooms,
- Groups of guests are considered to be the same as persons living in the same household.

Operators must draw up a COVID-19 prevention concept and appoint a COVID-19 officer.

Am I allowed to travel and stay overnight in a caravan within Austria?
Yes. However, the same requirements for staying in hotels and accommodation establishments apply to visiting campsites.

Services, retail outlets and business establishments

Info

Shops can now stay open from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm.

Which measures apply to retail outlets and shops?
The maximum number of customers allowed in a shop is that which ensures that there is no more than one customer per 20 m². In shopping centres, it is not allowed to linger
around general areas nor to consume food and drink. In shopping centres, the area of the respective shops is counted as the total area for assessing the number of square metres.

When entering and browsing in shops, you must:

- keep a minimum distance of two metres from anyone not from the same household, and
- wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask with an equivalent or higher standard).

It is not required to wear an FFP2 mask in outdoor customer areas and where there is no physical contact with persons not from the same household.

**Which measures apply to services and close contact services (e.g. hairdresser, pedicure)?**

All services and close contact services are now being offered again. There is to be no more than one customer per 10m² for close contact services. Other services may only be provided to as many persons as are necessary for the provision of the service.

Before and during the use and exercise of services, you must:

- Keep a minimum distance of two metres from anyone not from the same household, and
- Wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask with an equivalent or higher standard).

For close contact services (e.g. hairdresser, pedicure, cosmetics), entry testing is also required, i.e. a valid proof of a negative molecular biological (PCR or LAMP test) or antigen test. (The time of drawing the sample must not be more than 72 hours ago in the case of a molecular biological test and 48 hours ago in the case of an antigen test.)

If it is not possible to wear an FFP2 mask due to the nature of the service, other suitable protective measures (e.g. partitions) must be enforced.

If the close contact service is provided outside the usual business premises (e.g. external business premises, home visits, etc.), this is only possible if the service provider has proof of a valid negative test result for SARS-CoV-2. The time of drawing the sample must not be more than 72 hours ago in the case of a molecular biological test (e.g. PCR) and 48 hours ago in the case of an antigen test. In this case, clients are not required to get tested.
Close contact services are currently also allowed in old people’s and nursing homes.

**My company or business is affected by COVID-19. Where can I find more information?**

The Austrian Economic Chambers have set up a central information service for all companies and businesses affected by the coronavirus. Here you can find answers to questions about short-time work, company closures or relief measures, for example, and you can also get in touch personally.

The Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Regions and Tourism offers important information on coronavirus for agricultural enterprises as well as for tourism enterprises on its website.

**Where can I find information on the various funding opportunities and support offered by the Austrian Federal Government?**

You can find a comprehensive range of information under **FAQ: The Corona aid package of the Austrian Federal Government** (Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance)

### Events

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<tr>
<td>Events and meetings are now allowed to take place. However, they are subject to requirements to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2.</td>
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</table>

**Which events are allowed to take place without restrictions?**

- Professional meetings if these are necessary to maintain the performance of work,
- Assemblies according to the Austrian Assembly Act 1953, Fed. Law Gaz. No. 98/1953,
- Sporting events in top-level sport in accordance with section 14,
- Political party gatherings,
- Meetings for statutory bodies of legal entities,
Meetings in accordance with the Austrian Labour Constitution Act, Fed. Law Gaz. No. 22/1974, funerals,
• Shows, concerts, art or cinema performances when attended in a multitrack vehicle,
• Gatherings in non-public sports facilities in accordance with section 8 for the purpose of practising of sports in group sizes typical for the sport. This does not apply to spectators;
• Meetings for vocational training and further education purposes, for the fulfilment of required integration measures according to the Austrian Integration Act, Fed. Law Gaz. I No. 68/2017, for the preparation and execution of initial and further driver training courses, general driving examinations and final vocational examinations,
• Gatherings in private homes, with the exception of gatherings in e.g. garages, gardens, sheds or barns, as these places do not serve to satisfy an immediate housing need.

Which rules apply to gatherings without allocated seating?
A maximum of 50 people may attend gatherings without allocated seating. The serving of food and beverages is not permitted here. Events with 11 or more persons must notify the district administrative authority.

The following applies to visitors:
• When entering the venue, the ‘3 G’ rule applies.
• When visiting, keep a minimum distance of two metres away from persons not living in the same household. Wear an FFP2 mask in enclosed rooms.

Which rules apply to gatherings with allocated seating for up to 50 people?
Meeting places with allocated seating may be filled to a maximum of 50% capacity. Events with 11 or more persons must notify the district administrative authority. A prevention concept must already be in place and implemented.

The maximum number of persons present at any one time must not exceed half the capacity of the place of gathering.

People from different households may form a common group of visitors. Keep a distance of at least two metres between different groups of visitors. If this is not possible due to the seating arrangement, keep at least one seat free at the side between the groups.
All participants must wear an FFP2 mask (also outdoors) as well as provide evidence of a low epidemiological risk (‘3 G’ rule).

The rules for catering establishments apply to the serving of food and drink.

**Which rules apply to gatherings with allocated seating for 51 persons or more?**

Meeting places with allocated seating may be filled to a maximum of 50% capacity. Events with 51 persons or more must be approved by the district administrative authority. A prevention concept must already be in place and implemented. Furthermore, a COVID-19 officer must be appointed.

Authorised gatherings may be held outdoors with a maximum of 3,000 people and in enclosed rooms with a maximum of 1,500 people.

The maximum number of persons present at any one time shall not exceed half the capacity of the place of gathering.

Keep a distance of at least two metres between different groups of visitors. If this is not possible due to the seating arrangement, keep at least one seat free at the side between the groups.

The rules for catering establishments apply to the serving of food and drink.

All participants must wear an FFP2 mask (also outdoors) as well as provide evidence of a low epidemiological risk (‘3 G’ rule).

**When travelling by bus e.g. for a sightseeing trip, to which district administrative authority should I report the gathering?**

You must always report gatherings to the competent authority for the respective place where the gathering is taking place. If a sightseeing trip takes place from Vienna to Linz, you must report this to the authorities in Linz.
Are demonstrations allowed to take place?

Demonstrations are assemblies within the meaning of the Assembly Act 1953 and are permissible under the conditions of this Austrian federal law. This means that the respective competent administrative authority can also prohibit an assembly on the basis of the respective circumstances, e.g. if the security and/or health situation makes this necessary.

During a demonstration, you must still:

- maintain a minimum distance of two metres from anyone not living in the same household, and
- wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask with an equivalent or higher standard).

Labour law

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In order to provide those living in Austria with the best possible protection and safety, also when performing their work during the current pandemic, the Federal Government has made changes to its labour law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can find more information on the homepage for the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour.</td>
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</table>

What is "short-time work", and where can I find information about it?

The so-called “Corona short-time work” is a new, facilitated form of short-time work.

You can find more information under FAQ short-time work (Federal Ministry of Labour).

Can I claim compensation for loss of earnings by means of an administrative notice (official quarantine) if I have to self-isolate?

Yes. In the case of an official order for self-isolation due to a COVID-19 infection, you are entitled to claim compensation for loss of earnings during your period of isolation in accordance with section 32 of the Epidemic Act 1950.
Loss of earnings can be claimed by all self-employed and employed persons. The corresponding application is to be submitted informally to the district administrative authorities (public health department) with proof of the loss of earnings suffered.

**Where can I find information on labour law issues and special care time?**
You can find a comprehensive range of information under [FAQ: Labour law-related questions](#) and [FAQ: Special care time](#) (Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour)
FAQ: Social life

Info

The information shown below generally applies to all of Austria. However, the legal provisions and measures introduced in the different federal provinces and districts may differ. You can find information about your region under FAQ: Measures introduced in the different provinces and districts.

Social life

Info

The current pandemic has greatly changed the way we live together in our society. Due to the epidemiological situation in this country, not only increased protective and hygienic measures are a requirement, but also restrictions on social contacts in particular. The primary goal of the Austrian Federal Government is to prevent the healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed.

In order to contain the spread of SARS-CoV-2, it is important that everyone in Austria adheres to the protective measures in place. Interacting socially with others is only permitted within the bounds of what is possible.

The population is urgently encouraged to: Keep a minimum distance, observe hygiene measures, wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask of an equivalent or higher standard), and take advantage of the free testing opportunities and the free Corona vaccination.
Which rules apply to meeting during the day (from 05:00 to 22:00) with persons who do not live in the same household?
If you meet other persons indoors, the following applies:

- Be a group of no more than 4 adults
- with a total of no more than 6 minor children that need to be supervised.

If you meet other persons outdoors, the following applies:

- Be a group of no more than 10 adults
- with a total of no more than 10 minor children that need to be supervised.

Which rules apply to meeting at night (from 22:00 to 05:00) with people not from the same household?
If you meet other persons, the following applies:

- Be a group of no more than 4 adults
- with a total of no more than 6 minor children that need to be supervised.

Which rules apply to attending weddings?
Civil weddings and events for the practice of religion are exempt from the regulation. Therefore, both civil and religious weddings may take place, subject to the respective house rules.

Wedding celebrations on the usual scale are currently not allowed to take place. They are allowed to take place with a maximum of 50 guests. Keep a minimum distance from anyone not from the same household and wear an FFP2 mask. However, the serving of food and drink is still prohibited.

Which rules apply to attending funerals?
Funerals are allowed to take place. You must maintain a distance of at least two metres from anyone not from the same household and wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask of an equivalent or higher standard). Regarding the exceptions to the FFP2 mask requirement, please
Which rules apply to the practice of religion?
Religious events are exempt from the currently applicable regulations of events. However, churches and religious communities, in consultation with health authorities, have tightened their COVID-19 preventative measures. Please contact your church or religious community for detailed information on the respective measures and regulations.

Which rules apply to carpooling, taxi rides, school transports and transports for persons with disabilities?
The joint use of motor vehicles by persons not from the same household is permitted if only two persons are transported in each row of seats, including the driver. An FFP2 mask without an exhalation valve (or any equivalent or higher quality mask) must be worn when doing so. This also applies to cab rides.

Regarding the transportation of pupils, children and persons with disabilities, the distance between passengers may be less than two metres, provided it is not possible to maintain the distance due to the number of passengers, as well as when getting on and off. Children under the age of 14 do not have to wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask with an equivalent or higher standard). Children from the age of 6 can wear an ordinary face mask instead. Persons who cannot reasonably be expected to wear an FFP2 mask for health reasons are also exempt from wearing an FFP2 mask. In the event of an inspection, they must present an appropriate medical certificate.

Are choirs, brass bands and other musical groups allowed to rehearse again?
Yes. Choirs, brass bands and other music groups must observe the following rules: The ‘3 G’ rule, no more than one person per 20m² in enclosed rooms and keeping a minimum distance of two metres. You don’t have to wear an FFP2 mask (but it is recommended if the relevant music practice permits).
## Training and further education

### Info

Education is one of the cornerstones of a democratic society. Therefore, it is particularly important to ensure access to schools and universities as well as to vocational education and training in the best possible way, even during the current pandemic. However, due to the epidemiological situation, compliance with strict protective measures is also a requirement for the education sector.

In educational institutions, you must generally:

- keep a minimum distance of two metres from anyone not from the same household, and
- wear an FFP2 mask (or a mask with an equivalent or higher standard).

You can find information about nurseries, schools, universities and universities of applied sciences on the website of the [Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research](https://www.bmbvide.at).

### Can integration courses still take place?

Yes, as these are meetings for the fulfilment of required integration measures, pursuant to the Austrian Integration Act, Fed. Law Gaz. I No. 68/2017.

### Am I still currently allowed to take driving lessons and practical driving tests?

Yes.
Sports

Info

Sport is an important prerequisite for physical and mental health. However, due to the epidemiological situation in Austria, necessary restrictions have also been put into effect in this particular area of life. Special protective measures apply as there is an increased emission of aerosols due to the physical activity.

The Austrian Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport offers extensive information for the field of sport on its website: Frequently asked questions about the impact of coronavirus on the field of sport.

Which rules apply to using sports facilities?
Sports facilities such as gyms can reopen under strict conditions. Here, too, you must keep a minimum distance of two metres from persons not from the same household. When practising contact and team sports or when safety and assistance are required, the distance may be less if necessary. Wear an FFP2 mask in the general areas. However, this does not apply during practising sports.

Only one person per 20m² may be admitted. This person must follow the ‘3 G’ rule when entering.

Operators of non-public sports facilities must prepare a COVID-19 prevention concept and appoint a COVID-19 officer.

Are popular sports allowed to take place in public spaces?
Yes, popular sports in public spaces may take place with a maximum of ten people. This means that playing football with friends is also allowed again. You are obliged by law to report a group size of 11 persons or more.
**What currently applies to cable cars and ski lifts?**

Cable cars and ski lifts are operating normally. Keeping a mandatory distance of at least two metres applies, e.g. when queuing. FFP2 masks (or masks of an equivalent or higher standard) must be worn in enclosed and coverable means of transport (e.g. gondolas, coverable chairlifts), in the associated enclosed buildings (stations) as well as in the associated open-air areas (applies from the age of 14). From the age of six, children must wear some kind of face mask. In addition, gondolas and coverable chairlifts may only be used at 50 per cent of their capacity. Additional, tightened measures have possibly been put into place, depending on the region.

**What should be considered when practising professional sports?**

Gatherings to practise top-level sports may take place indoors with up to 100 athletes. An upper limit of 200 athletes applies outdoors. It is important to provide a COVID-19 prevention concept adapted for practising the relevant sport.

If the distance of at least two metres between persons cannot be maintained due to the nature of the top-level sport being practised, the risk of infection must be minimised by other suitable protective measures. This can be done, for example, by forming permanent teams. Neither a piece of material covering your nose and mouth nor FFP2 masks need to be worn while practising sports outdoors or at sports facilities. Sports that involve physical contact may only be practised on sports grounds, also in top-level sport.

Athletes as well as coaches and trainers have to present a form of proof within the meaning of the ‘3 G’ rule at least every seven days.
## FAQ: Precautions

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### Precautions

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<tr>
<td>Consistent compliance with the various protective measures during the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic is crucial to managing this health crisis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The protective measures are constantly evaluated by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection and adapted to the requirements of the epidemiological situation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The most important recommendations for reducing the risk of infection in everyday life are keeping your distance, regularly disinfecting your hands and wearing a face mask.</td>
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### Does a previous infection with SARS-CoV-2 exempt you from complying with the protective measures?
No. A previous infection with SARS-CoV-2 does not exempt you from complying with the protective measures, such as wearing a mask, keeping a minimum distance and quarantining.
However, the current legal situation provides for relief for persons who have had a SARS-CoV-2 infection in the past six months and can prove this, for example, by means of a medical certificate or notice of quarantine: They are exempt from undergoing the weekly workplace testing, as well as the entry tests (but not from the respective requirement to wear a mask). The exception does not apply to compulsory testing when travelling to Austria.

**Does a coronavirus vaccination exempt me from complying with the protective measures?**

No. A vaccination against the coronavirus does not exempt you from complying with the protective measures, such as wearing a mask, keeping a minimum distance and quarantining.

However, vaccinated persons are no longer classified as contact person I in the event of contact with a suspected case, but as contact person II.

According to the current state of science, a vaccination minimises the risk of becoming severely ill or dying from COVID-19 on an individual level. In exceptional cases, you could still become infected with COVID-19 despite having been vaccinated, but it is much milder and usually without complications or death. As a result of this, protective measures such as wearing a mask must still be adhered to until sufficient numbers of people have been vaccinated.

**Does a positive antibody test exempt me from complying with the protective measures?**

No. Persons with a positive antibody test are not exempt from complying with the protective measures, such as wearing a mask, keeping a minimum distance and quarantining.

However, the current legal situation provides relief for persons who have had a SARS-CoV-2 infection in the past six months and can prove this, for example, by means of a medical certificate, notice of quarantine, or a test for neutralising antibodies: They are exempt from undergoing the weekly workplace testing, as well as the entry tests (but not from the
respective requirement to wear a mask). The exception does not apply to compulsory testing when travelling to Austria.

**Who controls compliance with the protective measures and how high are the penalties?**
The police have the option of issuing a fine of 90,– EUR instead of filing a complaint if the distance rule or the requirement to wear a mask is not followed. The control of compliance with quarantine ("self-isolation") is the responsibility of the ordering district administrative authority. Any violations will be punished as an administrative offence. Fines of up to 1450,– EUR may be imposed. In addition, the provisions of sections 178 and 179 of the Criminal Code (endangering persons through communicable diseases) may be applied.

**Which rules apply to gatherings?**
From 5 am to 10 pm, up to four persons from different households plus six underage children are allowed to meet indoors. A maximum of ten persons from different households with a maximum of ten additional underage children are allowed to meet outdoors.

From 10 pm to 5 am, a maximum of four persons from different households plus six underage children are allowed to meet.

We also recommend that you comply with the hygiene measures in your respective private sphere.

**Can a person in need of support be accompanied by their personal assistance to gatherings?**
Yes. Personal assistance is not included in the permitted number of visitors. They may visit other people together with the person in need of support. It is important, however, that the persons visited all belong to one household. Even when receiving visitors, the personal assistance is not to be counted.
Social distancing rules

**Info**

In all public places in Austria, a distance of at least two metres must always be kept from anyone not from the same household – even outdoors.

This does not apply to persons living in the same household, nor to life partners, individual close relatives or individual important caregivers not living in the same household.

**The pavement isn’t wide enough. How should I keep a minimum distance?**
The minimum distance of two metres need not be observed if this obligation cannot be fulfilled in exceptional cases due to local conditions, such as a pavement that does not have the necessary width or in the transit area of structurally connected business premises.

**Does the minimum distance also have to be observed on public transport and when getting on and off?**
Regarding means of mass transportation, associated underground stations, platforms, stops, stations and airports, a distance of at least two metres must be maintained by persons not from the same household and an FFP2 mask must also be worn. If it is not possible to maintain the distance of at least two metres due to the number of passengers and when getting on and off, this rule may be deviated from by way of exception.

**Do I have to keep a minimum distance at work?**
Yes, unless other equivalent protective measures can be taken (e.g. putting up plexiglass walls).
Mandatory mask-wearing

Info

Respirator masks are available in various protection categories. For external protection, an ordinary face mask in everyday life is an effective measure for minimising droplet infections. However, special respirator masks (FFP2) must be worn in order to effectively protect yourself and others from infectious airborne particles.

When the following FAQs refer to "FFP2 masks", this includes masks of at least an equivalent, or any higher, standard.

Which types of ordinary face masks and protective masks are there? What are the differences?
Particle-filtering half masks (FFP2, FFP3 and CPA masks) filter particles from the air we breathe and are mainly used by various occupational groups as personal protective equipment to shield themselves from harmful substances. They are meant to protect yourself and others. These special types of protective masks are subject to legal regulations and must meet special test criteria. Masks with a valve (where the inhaled air is then exhaled) are NOT suitable for the protection of others. They are therefore reserved for health professionals dealing with infectious patients or residents.

FFP3:

- They filter up to 99% of particles and are mainly used by medical staff
- Recommended for healthcare professions when performing aerosol-generating activities (suction, intubation, etc.)
- Recommended for dental activities with aerosol production

FFP2:

- They filter up to 94 % of particles and protect both wearer and environment (if no exhalation valve is present)
- Recommended for care of infectious patients and suspected COVID-19 cases, unless aerosol-producing activities are performed.
- Visitors to old people’s and nursing homes must wear a mask without a valve
- Since 25 January 2021, it has been mandatory to wear a mask without a valve when entering shops and boarding public transport, as well as participating in certain outdoor gatherings (e.g. at markets, funerals and demonstrations).

Corona SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic respirator mask (CPA):

- They can be used for the care of infectious patients and suspected COVID-19 cases, provided that aerosol-producing activities are not performed.

Protective masks are special masks, such as medical masks protecting both nose and mouth (e.g. surgical masks), which are subject to the Austrian Medical Devices Act. They protect others within the vicinity of the wearer from droplets produced by the wearer when speaking, sneezing and coughing (for example during an operation). They can therefore only be used to protect others and not yourself.

Ordinary face masks:

- In the private sphere, ordinary face masks serve as a mechanical barrier and are intended to protect the surrounding environment from droplets formed when speaking, sneezing and coughing as part of mindful interaction with fellow human beings. There are no specific legal requirements and test criteria for this type of mask.

**How do I wear an FFP2 mask or ordinary face mask properly?**

Here you will find information on how to wear an FFP2 and ordinary face mask properly:

- Coronavirus: How to wear an FFP2 mask properly (info sheet)

**Where do I have to wear an FFP2 mask?**

It is mandatory to wear an FFP2 mask without an exhalation valve (or an equivalent or higher quality mask) indoors, excluding the private living area.

The requirement to wear a mask also applies, inter alia, in the following outdoor areas:
• Stops, stations and departure lounges
• Markets
• At protests
• At funerals

Do I have to wear a mask at work?
A face mask must be worn at work in enclosed spaces if physical contact with other persons cannot be avoided and the risk of infection cannot be minimised with the enforcement of other suitable protective measures (e.g. by means of a technical protective device, such as partitions or ‘Plexiglas’ walls). If technical protective measures make it impossible to carry out the work (e.g. in the case of actors and actresses), organisational protective measures (such as the formation of fixed teams) should be taken instead.

Persons who undergo weekly workplace testing within the meaning of the ‘3 G’ rule (Geimpft/vaccinated, Genesen/recovered, Getestet/tested negative) are exempt from wearing an FFP2 mask. However, these persons must still wear an ordinary face mask. The list of occupational groups concerned can be found in the FAQ on workplace testing.

In the health and care sector, wearing an FFP2 mask as well as a Corona SARS-CoV-2 Pandemic Respirator (CPA) is a requirement when dealing with patients and residents.

Who is exempt from wearing an FFP2 or ordinary face mask?
Infants up to the age of two must not wear a mask (risk of suffocation). Children from the age of six can wear a protective face mask. Persons must wear an FFP2 mask from the age of 14.

Persons who cannot reasonably be expected to wear them for health reasons (e.g. those with chronic respiratory diseases, anxiety disorders or with advanced dementia, asthma, children with ADHD, etc.) are exempt from wearing an FFP2 mask. These persons may wear an ordinary face mask if it reaches up to the ears and well below the chin. If this cannot be reasonably expected, then they are not required to wear a face mask.

In the event of a control (e.g. by officials from the public security service), the person must be able to prove why they are exempt from this requirement. For this, you need a confirmation from a doctor who is authorised to practise independently in Austria.
Deaf and severely hearing-impaired persons and their communication partners are also exempt from wearing either an FFP2 or ordinary face mask when communicating.

Pregnant women are also exempt from wearing an FFP2 mask. Instead, they must wear an ordinary face mask.

Speech therapists and their patients are exempt from wearing a mask for the duration of the speech therapy activity because the recognition of facial features and facial expressions is essential for performing successful speech therapy.

**Which masks have been approved as FFP2 masks?**

Under the applicable regulation, an FFP2 mask or a mask with at least an equivalent standard can be worn. This regards the wearing of respirator masks by private persons.

The following standards are considered at least equivalent:

- FFP3 (Europe)
- N95 (NIOSH-42C FR84, USA)
- P2 (AS/NZ 1716:2012, Australia/New Zealand)
- KF94 (Korea 1st Class KMOEL-2017-64)
- DS (Japan JMHLW-Notification 214,2018)
- KN95 (GB2626-2006, China)

**Can I re-use my FFP2 mask?**

The FFP2 mask is generally considered to be a disposable product. According to scientific findings, however, the FFP2 mask can be re-used as long as it has only been imbued with breathing air. After use, it should be hung to dry indoors for seven days.

If a respirator mask dried in this way continues to fit well, is completely dry and not visibly soiled or contaminated, it can be re-used up to five times.
Hygiene measures

Info

The following hygiene measures are recommended:

- Wash your hands regularly with soap or disinfect them with hand disinfectant
- Do not touch your face, especially your mouth, eyes and nose
- Avoid shaking hands and hugging
- Sneeze and cough into the crook of an arm or into a paper handkerchief
- Ventilate rooms every hour (crosswise if possible).
- Stay at home and avoid contact if you show signs of getting ill
- Wear an FFP2 mask or a mask of an equivalent standard
- Keep a minimum distance of two metres from anyone not from the same household

What is correct mobile phone hygiene and coughing and sneezing etiquette?
The following video from the Medical University of Vienna provides tips on correct hand hygiene. [https://youtu.be/HwMDo_QZkkI](https://youtu.be/HwMDo_QZkkI)

The following video from the German Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) provides tips on correct etiquette for coughing and sneezing. [https://youtu.be/1Xdlygg008E](https://youtu.be/1Xdlygg008E)

What should I do if I think I am a suspected COVID-19 case or have come into contact with someone with COVID-19?
Stay at home, minimise your contact with others and contact the health hotline on 1450 or your family doctor if you have symptoms or fear you may be ill.

I am pregnant – what do I have to consider?
In general, due to the physiological and immunological changes during pregnancy, an increased susceptibility to infections cannot be completely ruled out. It is therefore particularly important for you to observe general hygiene measures: good hand hygiene, correct
coughing and sneezing etiquette and keeping a minimum distance of two metres from other persons.

Pregnant women are exempt from wearing an FFP2 mask. The reason for this exception is because many pregnant women already suffer from natural dyspnoea as a result of them being pregnant and an FFP2 mask would therefore increase the problem of airway resistance. For reasons of infection control, however, this group of persons must, in any case, be required to wear an ordinary face mask. Of course, higher quality masks may also be worn on a voluntary basis.

You can find more information on pregnancy and COVID-19 on the homepage of the Austrian Society of Gynaecology and Obstetrics.

Studies have shown that from the beginning of the 14th week of pregnancy, there is risk of a more severe course of the disease. The risk of a more severe course of the disease in the case of an infection with SARS-CoV-2 could occur from the beginning of the 14th week of pregnancy. Expectant mothers can therefore claim time off from jobs where there may be increased exposure due to the type of work performed. This concerns pregnant women from the 14th week of pregnancy with jobs that require physical contact with others.

Employers are required, from this point onwards, to avoid this hazard by changing the working conditions or transferring the employee to another workplace. The option of working from home should also be considered.

If this is not possible, the pregnant employee is entitled to a paid leave of absence.

You can find more information on time off from work for pregnant employees on the Homepage of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour.

It is yet to be made clear whether the virus can be transmitted to the child during pregnancy or through breastfeeding. It is possible to give birth normally even if there is a suspected case or proven infection, provided there is no other medical reason not to do so. Breastfeeding should also be continued, given the beneficial properties of breast milk, if the clinical condition of the breastfeeding woman permits this.
What should I bear in mind when taking medication?
Information on the website of the Austrian Federal Office for Safety in Health Care

Quarantine

Info

You may be required to quarantine if you are ill, suspected of being ill, or suspected of carrying the infection. Compliance is particularly important as it is the only way to quickly break chains of infection and slow down the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Those who have come into contact with an infected person must self-isolate following a decision taken by the public health officer (public health authority). Such self-quarantine may also be mandatory upon travelling to Austria.

The responsible public health officer (public health authority) will inform the persons concerned about the clinical picture, courses of the disease and transmission risks, how they can monitor themselves, as well as how they should behave at home.

If you have problems getting hold of food and medicine, you can contact ‘Team Österreich’ (an initiative put in place by the Red Cross and Hitradio Ö3) on 0800 600 600 (every day from 7 am – 7 pm, completely free of charge).

If acute medical attention is required, you should ring 1450 or 144.

Which rules and regulations apply to quarantine?
Quarantine rules based on the principles and guidelines of the WHO (World Health Organisation) and ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control) apply throughout Austria.

The district administrative authority determines the exact regulations and informs the persons concerned.
**What should I consider when quarantining?**

In case of quarantine, the following rules must be observed:

- Do not leave your home
- Do not receive any visitors
- If you live with others in a flat, isolate yourself in separate rooms if possible (physical distancing)
- Use the sanitary facilities at different times to other family members or flatmates
- Do not use anyone else’s hygiene articles (including towels)
- Use a paper handkerchief or cough/sneeze into the crook of your arm. After doing so, dispose of the paper tissue in a separate bin liner
- Wash your hands frequently, at least after sneezing and coughing, before eating and after each visit to the toilet

If you experience any specific symptoms, please ring the hotline on 1450. For general questions, call us on 0800 555 621.

**For how long do I have to quarantine if I have been infected with SARS-CoV-2?**

You can find information in the Recommendation for discharge from hospital or self-isolation for COVID-19 cases (as at: 23.7.2020; based on recommendations from the Robert Koch Institute).

**Which quarantine rules apply when entering Austria?**

If quarantine is mandatory when arriving from other places, this must be commenced immediately. You may quarantine with relatives, but isolation from other persons must be observed. If this is not possible in your flat or house, you may also quarantine in an accommodation facility (e.g. hotel). If you are staying with an accommodation provider, you must show a booking confirmation upon entry into Austria.

Required quarantine due to entry into Austria from other places can be ended early. This can only happen, however, if:

- a test – either a molecular biological or antigen test – is taken on the fifth day at the earliest (day of entry constitutes “day zero”), or
- if you are leaving Austria.
For the purpose of taking a test or leaving the country, you may leave your home or accommodation, despite quarantine. Care should be taken here to minimise the risk of infection to the greatest possible extent (always wear an FFP2 mask, keep a minimum distance of two metres, avoid using public transport).

**Do other persons from the same household also have to quarantine?**

An official quarantine notice issued in accordance with section 7 of the Epidemic Act will generally apply to the person named in the notice (addressee of the notice). However, household members are generally classified as category I contacts and are therefore also required to quarantine in most cases following an official quarantine notice. You can find out more information on which specific measures apply to classified contact persons under Information for contact persons.

A quarantine period of 14 days, either from when the infected person first shows signs of symptoms or from the day of drawing a sample from an asymptomatic person with SARS-CoV-2 (=day 0), applies to household members classified as category I contacts who cannot comply with infection protection measures (see information for contacts), regardless of the occurrence of other cases in the same household.

If, on the other hand, during the infected person’s period of quarantine in the same household, the appropriate infection protection measures can be observed by the other household members, they are to quarantine for a period of 10 days from when they last came into contact with the infected person.

**Exception:**

If members of the same household can prove to the authorities that they did not come into close contact with the person tested positive in the shared household (e.g. in shared apartments), they do not have to quarantine under an official quarantine notice and can generally continue to do their errands or perform their professional duties. However, it is important to isolate oneself from the person tested positive, e.g. by staying in separate rooms, using sanitary facilities at different times and using separate hygiene articles and towels. It is also important to behave responsibly and to not come into contact with others.
How are notices regarding quarantine measures (isolation and restriction of mobility) issued for the person concerned?
Notices regarding quarantine measures (isolation and restrictions of mobility) are issued by means of a letter with advice of delivery (RSb). This means that such a notification may also be accepted by a substitute recipient, thus avoiding contact with a sick person. If postal delivery is not possible, the health authority may deliver the notice in person.

Will I receive help, for example, with getting provisions?
If possible, care should be provided by relatives or neighbours.

If this is not possible, you can contact ‘Team Österreich’ (initiative of the Red Cross and Hitradio Ö3) on 0800 600 600 (every day from 7:00 – 19:00, completely free of charge) or send a request to social services. The competent authorities for social services are the municipal offices, the district commission or, in statutory cities, the magistrate. In Vienna, it is the Vienna Social Fund.

You can find more information at oesterreich.gv.at: General information on social services

If acute medical attention is required, you should ring 1450 or 144.

What do dog owners do who have to quarantine? Who can take their dogs for a walk?
You are not allowed to leave your place of quarantine if you are quarantining at home.
You are neither allowed to socialise nor go out on the street or to parks with your dog.
Only if you have your own home are you allowed to move around your property, but you are still not permitted to socialise with others.

All hygiene rules should generally be observed when dealing with pets. In such cases, therefore, you should resort to using external dog care (boarding kennels, dog sitters).
## Workplace testing

### Info

Weekly workplace testing is provided for alongside the compulsory testing in the health and care sector for the following areas:

- Employees who deal with customers (e.g. retail outlets, services, transport, medical professions)
- Teachers and early childhood educators who deal with pupils
- Warehouse logistics, if employees are regularly unable to keep a minimum distance apart
- Public-sector works (where there is contact with the public)
- Top-level sport (for team and contact sports)

### Which tests count as proof of workplace testing?

All types of proof within the meaning of the ‘3 G’ rule count as valid proof.

### My employer does NOT provide testing – where can I get tested for free?

Opportunities for free testing are provided at all test centres within any of the federal provinces (see oesterreich.gv.at, “Österreich Testet” (Austria is testing)) and in participating pharmacies (see http://www.apotheke.or.at/). It is also possible to get tested on the premises of another company, as those from outside the company, such as relatives, customers or employees of neighbouring companies, are also admitted for testing.

### Is the result from the workplace test valid as proof of testing for close contact services?

Yes. Proof of weekly workplace testing can also be used as proof of entry testing if the applicable periods are observed.
Entry testing

**Info**

Entry testing is mandatory for close contact services. These include, in particular, services provided by hairdressers and beauticians, as well as those by massage, tattoo, piercing, manicure, pedicure and nail studios.

The result from a molecular biological test is valid for 72 hours. An antigen test cannot be older than 48 hours. Validity is calculated from when the sample was taken.

**What counts as entry testing?**
All types of proof within the meaning of the ‘3 G’ rule count as valid proof.

**Which tests do NOT count as proof of test for close contact services?**
Tests whose proper execution cannot be guaranteed by authorised bodies, will not be considered as proof of entry testing. This includes, for example, the results from free self-tests from the pharmacy without a digital certificate.

**At what age is it necessary to present proof of testing for close contact services?**
For children up to the age of ten, the test result of their parents or legal guardian is valid. Children older than ten must provide their own test result.

**Do I need a proof of testing for physiotherapy or curative massages?**
No. For health services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy or curative massages, it is not a requirement to present a negative test result. However, it is still mandatory to wear an FFP2 mask when using these services.
Who checks whether clients have valid proofs of testing with them?
The respective establishment may only admit those persons who can present proof within the meaning of the ‘3 G’ rule. The local health authorities - in cooperation with the police - will check this on a random basis.

Do I have to provide proof in terms of the ‘3 G’ rule if a close contact service provider comes to my home?
In the case of close contact services visiting you at home, the requirement for “entry testing” does not apply.

Do I still need to wear an FFP2 mask despite such proof?
Yes. This is especially important for people who have been tested, because a test only serves as temporary evidence and does not protect against further infection.

Do close contact service providers also have to provide proof within the meaning of the ‘3 G’ rule?
Staff with direct customer contact (e.g. hairdressers) must present proof within the meaning of the ‘3 G’ rule once a week. The employee must carry proof of this with them. If such proof cannot be provided, then an FFP2 mask must be worn when dealing with customers. Otherwise, wearing an ordinary face mask is sufficient, for example at the hairdresser.
FAQ: Measures introduced in the different federal provinces and districts

https://corona-ampel.gv.at/aktuelle-massnahmen/regionale-zusaetzliche-massnahmen/