FAQ – Nationwide Testing
Nationwide testing

These FAQs relate to the information provided by the Ministry of Health with respect to the programme of large-scale testing for the Austrian population. There may be some differences depending on how the programme is implemented in the individual federal states.

What is meant by nationwide testing (also often referred to as mass testing) for COVID-19?

Large-scale testing (mass testing) will now be carried in Austria, following the example set by other countries, South Tyrol and Slovakia. Such testing will be on a voluntary basis. The aim of this broad testing programme is to test as many people as possible for COVID-19 to detect infected individuals and thus to contain the spread of the virus on a sustainable basis.

(02/12/2020, 06:30)

Who can participate in the nationwide testing programme?

Anyone over the age of six who resides in Austria can take part. This includes individuals who are currently residing in Austria for work or studies. Minors must be accompanied by a legal guardian.

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Who will not be tested?

The following groups of people will not be tested:

- Those who have symptoms suggesting that they have Covid-19 (in such cases, please contact your GP or the health service hotline 1450).
• Those who are at home on sick leave due to another illness
• Those who have been in official quarantine within the past three months after testing positive for SARS-CoV-2
• Those currently in quarantine or self-isolation at home
• Those who are already earmarked for another test organised by the authorities
• Those who are regularly tested due to their work (e.g. healthcare professionals)
• Children who do not yet attend school.

This testing programme is not aimed at hospital in-patients and residents of retirement and care homes as they are regularly tested within the scope of other programmes.

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**Should I go for testing if I feel sick?**

No. We urge the population to follow the established rules in case of symptoms and to call their GP or 1450. Further information here can be found in the FAQs: Health and care

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**How can I register?**

You can arrange a test appointment on the website österreich.gv.at. Additional information has been available on österreich.gv.at since 1 December 2020. It also contains the respective links which can be used to register for the nationwide tests from 00:00 hours on 2 December 2020. The earliest possible time to register depends on the testing periods arranged for the individual federal states.

It is also possible for educators to register for testing from 2 December 2020 (with the exception of Tyrol and Vorarlberg, where registrations are already being made).

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Is it possible to register in other ways?

People who are unable to register online can have this done by a person they trust, which is why several bookings can be made using one mobile phone number or e-mail address. Appointment confirmations and test results are marked in a way that indicates who the intended recipient is (identifier). This identifier comprises the initials and the last two digits of the year of birth of the individual in question.

It is also possible to make a booking by telephone in some federal states.

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Where do I need to go?

When registering, it is possible to choose from any of the available test locations.

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Who will do the tests?

Antigen tests are carried out by medical personnel. If it is necessary to take a PCR test after returning a positive antigen test result, the swab is also taken by medical personnel. State administration and municipal employees are responsible for the corresponding administrative work, together with the National Defence Force, the Red Cross, volunteer fire brigades and other volunteers.

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What do people need to take with them when getting tested?

Ideally the e-card or, alternatively, another piece of official photo ID.

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Does this test cost anything?

No, the test is free.

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How will I get the results?

The results will be sent to you electronically via a link. You will need to provide authentication to access the results given their nature (health-related data). The test results are provided as an officially signed document, which you can view, save and print.

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What happens in the event of a positive antigen test result?

The individual concerned will be isolated by the authorities and required to take a PCR test. Persons with whom the individual came into close contact in the 48 hours prior to the test are determined. If the positive antigen test is confirmed by the PCR test, these contact persons will also be immediately isolated by the authorities.

If the PCR test returns a negative result, the individual concerned will no longer be required to isolate and the persons with whom the individual came into close contact will not be contacted.

In the event of a confirmed positive result: If no symptoms appear during the period of isolation, this can be stopped after ten days. If symptoms occur during the ten-day isolation period, the GP should be contacted. In case of mild symptoms, isolation may be ended 48 hours after the symptoms have subsided, but not earlier than 10 days (except in cases where taste continues to be affected, which does not prevent isolation from ending). For more details here, please refer to the recommendation for releasing COVID-19 cases from isolation (PDF, 124 KB)

(02/12/2020, 06:30)
Where should the swab for the PCR test be taken?

The PCR test should be taken immediately and at the same testing station where the antigen test was done. The PCR test should always be taken within 24 hours.

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How long does the testing process take?

The online registration process means that people can be seen quickly at the testing location. Results are ready in just 15 to 30 minutes. If a result is positive, arrangements are made for a swab for the PCR test to be taken, and further steps are taken. See also: What happens in the event of a positive antigen test result?

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Do the current restrictions continue applying to me if my result is negative?

All a negative test result means is that you were tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 at the time the test was made. The measures based on the COVID-19 Emergency Measures Ordinance and the general hygiene-related recommendations (keep your distance, wash your hands and minimise social contact) apply regardless of the test result.

(02/12/2020, 06:30)

What types of tests are available?

Antigen tests are performed by means of a nasal swab (Siemens and Roche). PCR tests, where necessary, are also carried out using nasal swabs.

(02/12/2020, 06:30)
Can I get tested with several persons at the same time? Family?

Each person’s data are recorded individually and an appointment is made for each individual person. Certain time slots are available for each testing station. If you want to be tested together with your family, we recommend you choose the same time slot. It is possible to make a booking for the whole family using the same contact details (mobile phone number or e-mail address).

(02/12/2020, 06:30)

Is the test mandatory?

No, testing within the scope of this nationwide testing programme is on a voluntary basis.

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Why is a nationwide testing programme being done now?

Given the sharp rise in infections in recent weeks, the Austrian Federal Government decided that it is necessary and appropriate to launch a large-scale testing programme, as is the case in other countries. This enables asymptomatic cases to be detected and isolated at an early stage, thereby interrupting chains of infection.

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What about false-positive tests?

Each positive test result is followed by a PCR test. This is how false-positives are prevented.

(02/12/2020, 06:30)
How often are people tested within the scope of this nationwide testing programme?

Each person will only be tested once within the scope of this nationwide testing programme. A second, PCR test is only ordered if an antigen test returns a positive result.

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Will my employer be informed if my test result is positive?

No. If you test positive for SARS-CoV-2, you must notify your employer yourself.

(02/12/2020, 06:30)

When will the tests be carried out?

Nationwide testing for educators: 5 to 6 December 2020 (except in Tyrol, Vorarlberg and Vienna, where testing will be carried out as part of the nationwide testing programme)

Dates of the testing programme in the various federal states:

- Burgenland: 10 to 15 December 2020
- Carinthia: 11 to 13 December 2020
- Upper Austria: 11 to 14 December 2020
- Lower Austria: 12 to 13 December 2020
- Salzburg: 11 to 13 December 2020
- Styria: 12 to 13 December 2020
- Tyrol: 4 to 6 December 2020
- Vorarlberg: 4 to 6 December 2020
- Vienna: 4 to 13 December 2020

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What is the legal basis for this testing programme?

This testing programme is being carried out under section 5a of the Epidemics Act (Epidemiegesetz).

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