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Information from the Hessian Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration on the corona virus

We are providing you with some information below, and also references to sources where you can obtain further up-to-date information on the corona virus.

At the end of 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was informed that there was a cluster of lung diseases of unknown origin in Wuhan (China). A few days later a new type of virus was identified as the cause. It is called SARS-CoV-2. The disease caused by the virus is called COVID-19 and is currently spreading worldwide.

On the following pages you will find:

1. General information about the corona virus
2. What precautionary measures can I take myself to ensure I stay healthy? What can I do if I notice symptoms?
3. Information on the compulsory wearing of masks in Hesse
4. Information on the spacing requirement in Hesse
5. Information for returning travellers and those entering Hesse
6. Information on church services and funeral ceremonies in Hesse
7. Information on family support during births and deaths in Hesse
8. Information on childcare in Hesse

1. General Information

What is the current situation?

The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) regularly evaluates the significance of the new type of virus for public health in Germany. The RKI publishes the current risk assessment at https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikobewertung.htm

The Hessian state government has decided the following for Hesse: In order to at least slow down the spread of the corona virus and not to endanger people it is necessary to minimize personal contact as far as possible - in the public as well as in the private sector. Further information can be found in the information on compulsory masks and the spacing requirements on the following pages.

Where can I get more general information about the corona virus in Hesse?

Current information can be found on the Hessian Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration website at the following link: www.hessenlink.de/2019ncov.

The Hessian Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration and the State of Hesse have set up free information hotlines for Hessian citizens. Due to the decline in enquiries, the times of availability will change as follows from 4 July:

- The accessibility for all departments except "health" is the same as the office hours for the state chancellery citizens' hotline:
- Monday to Thursday from 08:00-17:00, Friday from 08:00-15:00 (not available at the weekend).
- The health department (incl. questions about quarantine measures) can be reached daily from 09:00-15:00 (also at weekends).

For technical reasons the 0800-5554666 hotline cannot be called from abroad. In order to provide special assistance, returning travellers can call the **State Chancellery Public Telephone Service on 0611-32111000**.

Using a selection menu, you can then connect to the Corona "Health" department Hotline daily from 09:00-15:00.

If you have any questions you can also contact your local health authority. You can find the contact details here: <https://tools.rki.de/PLZTool/>.

2. What precautionary measures can I take myself to ensure I stay healthy?

People are urged to comply with the following hygiene rules as protective measures - against influenza as well:

- wash hands frequently and thoroughly (children and young people as well)
- only cough and sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your arm (children and young people as well)
- use disposable tissues and dispose of them in a bin after each use
- no shaking hands, no hugs / kiss on the cheek
- do not touch your nose, mouth and eyes with your hands (especially after holding on to handrails on buses or using door handles touched by many people, and also at home)
- clean/disinfect smartphones, mobile phones, tablets etc. regularly
- only ever use your own glasses and cutlery
- consistently avoid crowds of people.

What can I do if I notice symptoms?

if people experience symptoms of illness such as coughing, fever or shortness of breath, they should:

- contact their family doctor by phone,
- call 116 -117 (medical emergency service number), or
- contact the local health department by phone.

These will then clarify with the person making the enquiry whether infection with the new type of corona virus is likely and initiate further diagnosis and treatment if the suspicion is justified.

For more information please visit <https://www.infektionsschutz.de/> (also in other languages).

There is currently a great deal of misinformation circulating in the social media. Please use only the above sources for your information

3. information on the compulsory wearing of masks in Hesse

Citizens in Hesse have had to wear a mouth and nose cover since 27 April 2020.

Where does a mouth and nose cover have to be worn?

- in public transport vehicles (bus, train, taxi, ship and aircraft)
- in public areas in shops, banks and post offices etc.
- at the weekly market
- in all healthcare facilities such as hospitals and doctors' surgeries
- in covered shopping centres and in shopping streets (shopping streets are roofed or covered areas where shops are located and which are used for customer traffic)
- in amusement arcades and casinos
- in enclosed spaces in museums, castles and memorials as well as in zoos and animal parks
- during the provision and usage of body-related services (hairstylist, pedicure, tattoo studio etc.)
- The coverage obligation also applies to service staff in restaurants and cafes while they are carrying out their work.

What is a mouth and nose cover?

Mouth and nose cover means any close-fitting protection for the mouth and nose which, by its nature, is suitable for reducing the spread of transmissible droplet particles or aerosols produced by coughing, sneezing or normal pronunciation (singing), irrespective of any label or certified category of protection.

Spacing remains very important.

The contact restrictions and spacing rules are not overridden by the wearing of mouth and nose covers (everyday masks).

Exceptions

The obligation to wear a mouth and nose cover does not apply to children under 6 years of age or persons who cannot wear a mouth and nose cover due to a health impairment or disability.

Fines

Not wearing a mouth and nose cover (everyday mask) is an administrative offence. If citizens do not wear a mask and do not put one on after being spoken to, a repeated infringement may be subject to a fine of € 50. In addition to the everyday masks, which are often self-made, scarves or shawls are also accepted.

4. Information on the spacing requirement

At present, staying in public spaces is permitted alone, with one other person or together with members of one's own and one other household. In addition, staying in groups of no more than ten people is allowed without respecting the minimum distance:

a minimum distance of 1.5 metres must be maintained when meeting any other people.

Exceptions apply:

- in public transport,
- when accompanying and caring for minors or persons in need of support,
- when taking examinations, in particular state examinations and career examinations,
- when donating blood,
- to meetings of persons who need to cooperate immediately for business, professional, service or care purposes,
- for meetings and court hearings,
- where appropriate, for funeral ceremonies and burials with an exemption granted by the authorities.

5. Information for returning travellers and those entering the country

Returning travellers and entry: what should you bear in mind when you return from holiday, for example?

The current State of Hesse quarantine regulations, which have been in force since 15.06.2020, state that persons who enter the state of Hesse by land, sea or air from abroad and who have stayed in a risk area (in accordance with paragraph 4 of the regulation) at any time within 14 days before entering the state of Hesse are obliged to go into quarantine immediately after entry taking the direct route to their own home or other suitable accommodation. Report directly to your responsible health authority.

Risk areas are states or regions outside the Federal Republic of Germany for which there is an increased risk of infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus at the time of entry into the Federal Republic of Germany. Risk area classifications are issued by the Federal Ministry of Health, the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Homeland Affairs and published by the Robert Koch Institute. Here is the link for this:

https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_corona_virus/Risikogebiete_neu.html

Transit through a risk area (specifically: immediate transfer within an airport) does not constitute a stay in the risk area.

When do I not have to go into quarantine?

All travellers from so-called risk areas must go into domestic quarantine and report their entry to the health authority. This does not apply to travellers from risk areas who have a negative test which was carried out no more than 48 hours before entering the country AND who can present a medical certificate referring to this test. In this case, you do not need to notify the responsible health authority.

There are also exceptions for certain groups of people and professions. Especially for those who are important for the supply of goods to the public, the transport of people or the health care system and also for emergency services such as police forces.

Also excepted are transit or short-term stays in Hessen or

abroad. Seasonal workers are exempt from the quarantine rules under certain conditions.

Which tests are (not) recognised?

A molecular biological test is only a PCR test, not an antibody test. Therefore only results based on a PCR test are accepted. An antibody test is not sufficient.

What should I do if my test is positive/negative?

If your test is negative, this result will be documented in the medical certificate referring to it. If the medical certificate confirms the test result, you are exempt from the current quarantine regulations. You must always carry your medical certificate with you in order to prove this. However, you no longer have to report to your local health authority.

If your test is positive, you will become a so-called "index case". The relevant health authority will receive the laboratory results from the laboratory or from your doctor (depending on where you have been tested) and take the next steps in quarantine and contact tracing. This means that you do not necessarily have to report to your local health authority after a positive test result. Both the laboratories and the doctors are obliged to report positive findings directly. The health authority responsible for you will then contact you.

6. Information on church services and funeral ceremonies

Church services and religious gatherings can now take place again if the spacing and hygiene regulations are observed. Even if this is not to the usual extent, people can practice their faith together and come together for the Eucharist and Holy Communion. Services and religious gatherings will be possible again as from 4 May if:

- the required minimum spacing of 1.5 metres can be maintained when no suitable separation devices are available,
- no objects are accepted and subsequently passed on between persons who do not belong to the same household,
- the name, address and telephone number of the participants are recorded by the organiser to enable tracing of infections,
- suitable hygiene concepts are drawn up and implemented in accordance with the Robert Koch Institute recommendations on hygiene, management of access and avoidance of queues, and
- notices on the required spacing and hygiene measures are displayed in a clearly visible location.

Hygiene concepts must be suitable for preventing the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus or considerably reducing the risk of infection in individual cases. All the necessary measures must be taken. There is no obligation to wear mouth and nose covers.

Meetings at funeral ceremonies and funerals are also possible provided that the above-mentioned points of the Rules of Worship are observed.

7. Information on family support during births and deaths in Hesse

The existing visitation facilities for hospitals, rehabilitation facilities and other institutions will be relaxed to a large extent after the state government's decision of 1.7.2020.

- Visits to rehabilitation clinics are possible without restriction from 15 July onwards.
- In hospitals, the patient may receive a total of two visits in the first six days. A maximum of two people may visit each time. From the seventh day onwards, patients may be visited by a maximum of two persons every day. These rules also apply from 15 July.
- Workshops for people with disabilities may be visited by anyone from 6 July onwards, provided they are healthy and have not had contact with COVID patients.

In addition, further visits by close family members are possible in individual cases. The institution, e.g. the hospital, may allow the accompaniment of close family members, especially during births or deaths, if the medical staff treating the patient deems this necessary for ethical and social reasons.

8. Information on childcare:

The ban on visiting day-care centres has been abolished in principle since 6 July 2020. It only continues to apply to children and staff with COVID-19 disease symptoms. All Hessian day care centres are thus able to resume regular operations. Emergency care or restricted normal operation has ended with the resumption of normal operation. The general rules apply again.

What does regular operation mean?

During regular operation the admission of children who are cared for under contract or according to the statutes is based on SGB VIII. The framework conditions in accordance with the Hessian Child and Youth Welfare Code (HKJGB) apply here in principle.

The day-care centres are obliged to adapt their hygiene plans for regular operation to the SARS-CoV-2 virus conditions. The state has published appropriate hygiene recommendations to help those who run day care centres adapt their hygiene plans.

It should be noted that regular operation is subject to pandemic conditions. There is still no vaccine or medication available against the SARS-CoV-2 pathogen. This means that there may also be restrictions on the care services available for your child. This may also affect familiarisation of children who have recently been admitted to a day care centre.

The fact that we still have to live with SARS-CoV-2 can also have an effect on the personnel and the facilities offered by your day care centre. Employees with symptoms may not enter the day care centre. It is also possible that individual specialists may not be employed in the immediate care of children on the basis of an individual occupational health risk assessment. In this case, the day care centre operator should seek solutions together with the Youth

Welfare Office. The deployment of persons outside the skilled labour index and deviation from the minimum personnel requirement is permitted on a temporary basis with the approval of the Youth Welfare Office - as has been the practice in the past.

Even if your day care centre operator will be trying to make most facilities available, he or she must take the special pandemic conditions into account. We ask for your understanding.

When is my child not allowed in the day care centre?

A child who is clearly ill should stay at home - this applies now, but it also applied before the Corona pandemic.

A ban on visiting the day-care centre or nursery also applies if at least one of the relevant symptoms typical of COVID-19 is present:

- fever (above 38.0°C)
- dry cough, i.e. without phlegm (not caused by a chronic illness such as asthma) - a slight or occasional cough or occasional sore throat should not, however, lead to automatic exclusion
- impairment to the sense of smell or taste (not as a side-effect of a cold).

All symptoms must be acute, i.e. symptoms from chronic illnesses are not relevant. If your child is chronically ill (e.g. hay fever) we recommend that you obtain a medical certificate to provide clarity to the day care centre.

As parents, you decide whether to contact your child's doctor by telephone depending on your child's condition. The test indication is determined by the doctor treating the patient.

It is important to note that a child who only has a common cold is still allowed to attend the day care centre.

The recommendations for action were sent to day care centres, youth welfare offices and schools throughout Hessen. You can find the online version with further information here: <https://soziales.hessen.de/gesundheit/corona-hessen/themenbereich-kinder-und-jugendliche/krankheits-und-erkaeltungssymptome>