Together against corona
How to protect ourselves against the coronavirus
1. Getting tested for ourselves and for our loved ones

We all wish to stay healthy. This is why we have to protect ourselves as well as our family and friends from infection with the coronavirus. To do this, it helps to get tested regularly and immediately self-isolate should the test be positive. Indeed, a test can lead to early detection of a coronavirus infection – even if you are not feeling ill.

There are three different testing methods:

1. **Rapid Test**

Every person living in Germany can get a rapid test at least once a week and free of charge. This also applies if there is no reason to suspect you might be infected with the coronavirus. The rapid test is performed by trained staff, for instance in doctors’ practices or test centres. Often appointments will need to be arranged in advance. You will receive a written or digital certificate of the test result. However, a negative result only has a limited period of validity and cannot completely exclude the possibility of an infection.
2. **Self-test**

With a **self-test**, you can test yourself. Self-tests can provide additional security in certain everyday situations, such as before paying a visit to our family or friends. Over-the-counter self-tests are available in pharmacies, drugstores and shops. Under specific circumstances, such as directly before visiting a medical facility, a self-test may be carried out on site under supervision of professionals (supervised antigen test for self-testing). In this case, too, a negative result is only valid for a limited period of time.

3. **PCR test**

The **PCR test (laboratory test)** provides the most reliable result and is analysed in a laboratory. For this test, professionals in doctors’ practices, pharmacies or test centres take samples from the nose and throat (e.g. after a positive rapid test). The result, which you receive as a written or digital certificate, is usually available after one to two days. A positive result is also transmitted to the competent health office. The same applies for a negative PCR test result if a previous rapid test had been positive. A PCR test is performed if you show symptoms, suspect you may be infected or have tested positive with a rapid test or self-test. Sometimes it is also used to conduct mass screenings in order to prevent the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus from spreading in schools and other educational institutions.

**Important:** If a rapid test or self-test turns out positive, you must arrange an appointment for a PCR test with your doctor or by calling 116 117. Test centre or pharmacy staff can see to it that a PCR test is performed immediately. The result of a rapid test or self-test is verified using the PCR test.

**In any case – and even with a negative result – the DHM+A rules must still be observed.**
2. The combination is key: Protection against infection with the DHM+A+A rules

Even though it restricts us in our everyday lives – with a few simple methods, we can contribute to slowing the spread of the coronavirus:

**Distancing:** Always keep at least 1.5 metres away from other people, no matter if you are on your way to work, shopping or strolling in the park.

**Observing hygiene rules:** Cough and sneeze into the crook of your arm and regularly wash your hands with soap for at least 20–30 seconds.

**Masking up:** In certain situations – particularly when there is little space and it is impossible to always maintain the minimum distance from others – wear a mask over the mouth and nose.

**Airing:** Make sure that rooms are well aired, since coronaviruses can even spread via miniscule droplet nuclei (aerosols) that are expelled when speaking or exhaling and which, in enclosed spaces, may remain suspended in the air for a long time.

**Using the app:** The Corona-Warn-App can quickly and anonymously inform us in case we spent time in an infected person’s vicinity.
Using the app: The Corona-Warn-App can quickly and anonymously inform us in case we spent time in an infected person’s vicinity.

Even those who have already been infected with the coronavirus and have since recovered should continue to take these protective measures, since reinfection and therefore also the risk of transmitting the virus to others cannot be ruled out completely.

Important: Observe the rules that apply in your region, since the current regulations differ depending on the respective number of coronavirus infections.
3. To protect everyone:
Take quarantine rules and isolation seriously

We do not want to endanger our family and friends. Therefore, we should *avoid contacts* and stay at home should we detect symptoms of a coronavirus infection or have had contact with a person who tested positive for the coronavirus.

Symptoms of a coronavirus infection may include, for instance, a fever, coughing, a runny nose, headache and aching limbs, fatigue, a sore throat or loss of smell and taste.

If you *develop symptoms*, call your doctor’s practice, a local coronavirus hotline or a fever ambulance. At night and on weekends or holidays, you can also call the on-duty medical service by dialling the number 116 117 from anywhere in Germany. There, you will get information on what to do next.

*In case of an emergency, dial 112.*

1. Everyone who *tested positive for the coronavirus* must go into isolation at home or in a hospital – depending on the severity of the disease. This is the only thing that helps to break the chain of infection and not pass on the coronavirus. Self-isolation at home may be lifted at the earliest 14 days after the onset of the disease and only with a negative result from a rapid or PCR test. The decision is made by the
1. If you had contact with a person infected with the coronavirus, but do not have symptoms, please make sure to inform your competent health office immediately. They will tell you what to do and bear in mind.

To find your local health office, check: www.rki.de/mein-gesundheitsamt

Anyone who has had contact with an infected person must self-quarantine at home. After the 14-day quarantine period, a negative result from a rapid or PCR test must be presented before the quarantine can be lifted.

Important: Anyone wishing to enter Germany from another country should make sure to check the information on the current entry and quarantine regulations at: www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/coronavirus-merkblatt-fuer-reisende

Also in other European countries and further abroad, differing rules apply that change ever so often. To read what rules currently apply in a specific country, see the website of the Federal Foreign Office: www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/ReiseUndSicherheit
4. Roll up your sleeves: the coronavirus vaccination is our way out of the pandemic

We want to be able to freely do sports again as well as see our family and friends – coronavirus vaccination is the most effective way to get us there. Getting vaccinated free of charge provides the best protection that is currently available against the illness and its consequences. And it protects our loved ones, especially our grandparents and our parents. Since the older you are, the higher the risk of a severe or fatal disease progression. The more people get vaccinated, the harder it becomes for the virus to spread. And we can prevent infections that may lead to severe illness or death.

Several effective and safe vaccines against the coronavirus are available in Germany. Since 7 June 2021, the vaccination prioritisation no longer applies. This means that you can get a vaccination appointment irrespective of your state of health or occupation. However, as long as the amount of vaccine available remains limited, some waiting time can be expected. However, there is no obligation in Germany to get vaccinated against the coronavirus.
With the exception of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, **two doses** are necessary to achieve full protection. A full protection will be attained about two weeks after the second vaccination.

The paper vaccination booklet, a confirmation of vaccination issued by the doctor or centre that performed the vaccination and the digital vaccination certificate all count as **proof of vaccination**.

All relevant information on the coronavirus vaccination, the vaccines, on arranging an appointment and on the vaccination process are available at [www.corona-schutzimpfung.de](http://www.corona-schutzimpfung.de) or by calling the nationwide free information hotlines **116 117** and **0800 0000837** (English, Turkish, Arabic, Russian) as well as in sign language at [www.zusammengegencorona.de](http://www.zusammengegencorona.de).
Publication details

Published by
Federal Ministry of Health
Referat Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
(Public Relations Division),
Publications
D-11055 Berlin

Design, layout and typesetting
Cosmonauts & Kings GmbH, 10559 Berlin

Printed by
Hausdruckerei BMAS, 53123 Bonn

Paper
Vivus 100, Blue Angel certified

As of:
June 2021, 2nd edition

Order free of charge at:
Email publikationen@bundesregierung.de
Phone 030 182722721
Fax 030 18102722721
Mailing address Publikationsversand der Bundesregierung
PO Box 48 10 09
18132 Rostock

Order no.: BMG-G-11159e

This brochure is published free of charge as part of the public relations work of the Federal Ministry of Health. It may not be used by political parties, election candidates or campaign workers for the purpose of election publicity during an election campaign. This applies to European, Federal Parliament, Land Parliament and local elections.