



**MiMi** Das Gesundheitsprojekt  
Mit Migranten für Migranten  
in Bayern

englisch



# Coronavirus information for Bavaria

Multilingual information



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## The role of reliable information in times of coronavirus

The coronavirus pandemic has meant enduring changes for everyday life and continues to influence it. In order to protect ourselves, our families and all our fellow citizens, we need reliable health information that is easy to understand.

The pandemic situation is constantly changing. The responsible authorities, scientific institutions, the health care system, the media, and politicians are trying hard to keep people informed. Nevertheless, it can be difficult to find the particular information you need at the time. At such critical times, people feel insecure and try different ways of finding out more. Unfortunately, they often come across incorrect information – including on social media – which leads to uncertainty.

Also, not all information is available in all languages needed. We have therefore summarised here the most important core information for people with a migration background living in Bavaria. For the latest information and further details, we have inserted links to reliable sources in the text below.

## The coronavirus SARS-CoV-2

SARS-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus identified at the beginning of 2020 as the cause of the illness called COVID-19, and has since spread across the world. In the past, similar coronaviruses have also caused severe respiratory illnesses in humans (SARS/ Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and MERS/ Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). Scientific findings suggest that these viruses have at some point passed from wild animals – their previous 'hosts' – to human beings as well.

The more intense the rate of transmission – and therefore the spread of the virus – the more often changes occur in its genetic material when it multiplies, leading to new virus variants. For SARS-CoV-2, these variants are designated using the letters of the Greek alphabet.

Especially older people and people with pre-existing illness are at a higher risk of developing severe disease, but younger people can also develop pneumonia with shortness of breath, and have to be treated in hospital. Some of these patients die of COVID-19 despite being treated in intensive care wards. This is not only tragic for those affected and their relatives. The more rapid the spread of the virus, the more strain there is on the health care system, which, in the worst-case scenario, might become overwhelmed: other patients then also no longer receive optimal health care. A range of measures – from compulsory face masks to vaccination and 'lockdowns' – are intended to prevent this.

Becoming ill with COVID-19 can – regardless of the severity of the illness – also lead to late and long-term effects (which are known as 'long COVID' or 'post-COVID-19 syndrome'): e.g. organ dysfunction, general malaise, listlessness, memory problems and persistent exhaustion. Some of those affected are scarcely able to cope with their everyday lives, or no longer manage to do so at all.

If you are still experiencing health impacts a considerable time after your infection, please contact your family GP practice. More and more services are becoming available for people with long COVID/post-COVID. Further information is available e.g. on these internet pages:

<https://www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus/basisinformationen/long-covid-langzeitfolgen-von-covid-19/#c16099>

<https://www.stmgp.bayern.de/coronavirus/post-covid/>

Further information and updates in many languages are available on the following internet pages:

[integrationsbeauftragte.bayern.de/downloads/](https://integrationsbeauftragte.bayern.de/downloads/)

[mimi.bayern/index.php/muenchen-corona-alltag](https://mimi.bayern/index.php/muenchen-corona-alltag)

[integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de/staatsministerin/corona](https://integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de/staatsministerin/corona)

[zusammengegencorona.de](https://zusammengegencorona.de)

## Transmission and its prevention

SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted through the aerosols (especially when speaking and singing) and droplets (e.g. when sneezing or coughing) produced when breathing out. Because aerosols can remain infectious for several hours, other people can become infected by breathing them in. Virus particles can also be transmitted from surfaces to the face via the hands.

General infection control rules (shortened to the slogan '**AHA+L+A**' in German) are intended to disrupt these transmission pathways.

**Social distancing (Abstand):** the chances of transmission are markedly lower when people keep a distance of 1.5 m from others.

**Hygiene:** regular and thorough handwashing using soap kills virus particles present on the skin.

**Masks in everyday life (Alltag):** covering the mouth and nose correctly with a medical-grade face mask/particle filtering half mask without valve prevents exhaling or inhaling aerosols and droplets – see *Masks and how to use them*.

**Ventilation (Lüften):** regular airing of enclosed spaces reduces the concentration of infectious aerosols and droplets that may be present.

**App:** using the 'Corona-Warn-App' (coronavirus warning app) for smartphones helps people disrupt chains of transmission. It is available free of charge from the App Store and Google Play.

In addition to these basic rules, additional measures are in force in each German state (Bundesland).

You can find the current regulations of the Bavarian Infection Protection Measures Ordinance in several languages at [stmgp.bayern.de/coronavirus/rechtsgrundlagen](https://stmgp.bayern.de/coronavirus/rechtsgrundlagen)

## Masks and how to use them

Covering the mouth and nose correctly with a medical-grade mask/particle-filtering half mask without valve protects from coronavirus transmission through aerosols and droplets. Depending on the current regulations, wearing a mask is compulsory in many public spaces. Everyday fabric masks are no longer recommended, and only certain types of masks are still approved:

**Medical face masks ('surgical masks'):** these masks mainly protect other people from the infectious droplets coming from the wearer. If they are worn snugly against the face, they also offer the wearer some limited protection. Medical masks are single use products and comply with legal requirements if they carry the CE mark. They begin to lose their protective effect as soon as they become damp, and must then be replaced.

**Particle-filtering half-masks (masks according to the FFP2, FFP3 and KN95/N95 standards):** these masks protect from particles, droplets, and also from aerosols. They are available with or without



a valve. Masks without valve, as long as they are worn correctly (snugly against the face), protect the wearer as well as people in the vicinity. The valve allows air to escape unfiltered. A mask with a valve therefore only protects the person wearing it, but still puts others at risk: this means that persons wearing this type of mask are not complying with legal obligations.

All masks must fit snugly against the face. They must cover both nose and mouth in order to achieve their protective effect. If you are having difficulty using masks because of a health condition, it is best to get medical advice.

## Signs of SARS-CoV-2 infection

On average, three days pass between infection with the currently dominant Omicron variant and the first signs of illness. This period may last up to 14 days. However, an infected person can transmit the virus to others before they notice any symptoms. Not every person infected with SARS-CoV-2 becomes ill.

The most common symptoms are cough, runny nose, and fever, as well as loss of the sense of taste and smell. Other possible symptoms are head and body aches, fatigue, sore throat, stomach ache, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea.

If you realise you are having symptoms of COVID-19, or if you had contact with an infected person, avoid contact with other people and stay at home (**quarantine**). Please do not go to a doctor's practice without making an appointment first. Call your family GP practice or the on-call medical service. It is available across Germany around the clock by calling 116 117. In an emergency, dial 112.

## Coronavirus testing

Different methods exist to determine whether a person is infected with SARS-CoV-2. Two commonly used methods are presented here.

The **rapid antigen test** examines if certain components (proteins) of the virus are present in the body. To perform the test, a swab is taken from the nasal cavity, and the material is then checked for the SARS-CoV-2 antigen. Antigen tests are fast and can be performed without involving a laboratory. Their results, however, are not 100 percent reliable. In addition, quality may vary between tests from different manufacturers. The Paul-Ehrlich-Institute regularly updates its list of antigen tests at [https://www.pei.de/EN/newsroom/dossier/coronavirus/coronavirus-content.html;jsession-id=59DAA71945EE623C629A291C58D1165B.intranet221?cms\\_pos=8](https://www.pei.de/EN/newsroom/dossier/coronavirus/coronavirus-content.html;jsession-id=59DAA71945EE623C629A291C58D1165B.intranet221?cms_pos=8)

The higher the Cq-value indicated on the list (maximum score 100%), the better is the test. The  $Cq \leq 25$  value should be 100%, and the Cq 25–30 value should be as high as possible.

A negative result only confirms that the person was most probably not infectious at the time of testing, meaning there is only a low risk of infecting anyone else in the next few hours. This risk, however, is not zero. It is possible that the person is already infected, but not yet producing enough virus to be detected by the rapid test. Or it can mean that the person has already overcome the infection. This is why the protective measures ('AHA+L+A' rules) must be adhered to even when the antigen test result is negative. If an antigen test returns a 'positive' result, it is necessary to verify it with a PCR test.



The **PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) test** indicates whether the genetic material of the virus itself is present. It is more meaningful and more reliable than the antigen test, and is therefore used as a confirmatory test. For PCR testing – same as for rapid testing – a swab is taken from inside the nose or the throat, and then examined in the laboratory. It usually takes one to two days for the result to come back. This type of test is extremely reliable and represents the highest standard.

**Important to know:** in general, a positive test result does not mean that somebody is to blame for the infection: while protective measures can limit the spread of the virus and reduce the risk of infection, they cannot entirely exclude the possibility.

## Testing options

Currently, all citizens can undergo one antigen test per week free of charge. Testing options include testing centres and pharmacies. Testing is performed by trained personnel. The personnel issues written or digital confirmation of the result. A negative antigen test result remains valid for no more than 24 hours, and only for certain official purposes.

Rapid antigen tests are also available for purchase in the form of self-testing kits through pharmacies, chemists and other retail outlets. However, the results of self-tests are usually not recognised for official purposes. Self-tests can provide additional safety for private gatherings if all involved take the test a short time before getting together.

In order to prevent infections in the workplace, employers must determine measures for workplace infection control. Basic measures include keeping the minimum social distance, airing indoor spaces, wearing masks, and regular testing services (rapid antigen tests or self-tests) for employees who do not exclusively work from home. The decisions about which measures are required and implemented in each workplace are made by the employer.

The rate of incorrect test results is higher for rapid antigen tests and self-tests. For this reason, a PCR test should always be performed after a positive rapid antigen or self-test result.

PCR tests are carried out by specialist personnel, including in doctor's practices and testing centres. Here, too, you will receive written or digital certification of the result, which is valid for official purposes.

All positive test results (except those of self-tests) are also reported to the responsible public health authority (Gesundheitsamt), so that the required infection control measures can be put in place. In order to protect others, it is important you enter a positive test result into the 'Corona-Warn-App' on your smartphone. People who have been in your close vicinity will then receive a recommendation to get tested.

The following applies to everyone who receives a positive coronavirus self-test result: you should isolate immediately and avoid contact with other people as much as possible, as you may be highly infectious. If you didn't perform the test at home, return there at once. Also adhere to the social distancing and hygiene rules. Make an appointment for a PCR test immediately – either through your family GP, the medical on-call service by phoning 116 117, or the public health authority (Gesundheitsamt) – in order to confirm the result of the self-test. There, you will also receive all information required for the next steps.

## Treatment options

Several medications are now available in Germany for the early treatment of COVID-19 in people who are at a high risk of progressing to severe illness. These medications are intended to/can inhibit virus replication in the body: they include monoclonal antibodies administered in medical

practices or hospitals as infusions or injections, as well as oral antiviral medications for home use. It is important to note that treatment should be initiated as soon as possible after diagnosis, and in most cases no later than 5 days after symptoms appear.



## COVID-19 protective vaccination (base immunisation)

Restrictions to public and private life, such as contact restrictions and lockdowns, are short-term measures. They serve to limit the spread of the virus, to protect the health care system from being overburdened, and to prevent deaths. The long-term goal, however, is that SARS-CoV-2 can no longer spread uncontrolled, and that COVID-19 no longer has severe health consequences. This can be achieved through protective vaccination.

The vaccines against COVID-19 developed to date are intended to prevent progression to severe disease and death in particular. They also reduce the probability of infecting others, but not reliably. Five COVID-19 vaccines are currently approved for use in Germany. They have become known by the names of their manufacturers:

- Comirnaty® (by BioNTech/Pfizer, basic immunisation: two doses 3 to 6 weeks apart, from age 12; for children from 5 years of age with existing medical conditions or contact with at-risk individuals, or upon request and after receiving medical advice, two vaccine doses of the age-appropriate formulation 3 to 6 weeks apart; for all healthy children between ages 5 and 11, one dose of the age-appropriate formulation)
- Spikevax® (by Moderna, basic immunisation: two doses 4 to 6 weeks apart, recommended from age 30)
- Vaxzevria® (by AstraZeneca, two doses 4 weeks apart, recommended from age 60; currently however, an mRNA vaccine is recommended instead of Vaxzevria® for the second dose)
- Jcovden® (by Johnson&Johnson, single dose, recommended from age 60; persons vaccinated with a single dose of Jcovden® must receive an additional vaccine dose to achieve basic immunisation. Recommended is an mRNA vaccine from 4 weeks after the previous dose)



- Nuvaxovid® by the US-based pharmaceutical company Novavax (basic immunisation: two doses at least 3 weeks apart; recommended from age 18, not while pregnant or breastfeeding). This product is currently approved for basic immunisation only, not for booster doses.

Comirnaty® (BioNTech/Pfizer) and Spikevax® (Moderna) are **mRNA vaccines**. This type of vaccine does not transport any virus, only the blueprint (mRNA) for one component of its outer envelope (the 'spike protein') into the cells of the human body. These will then manufacture the spike protein for a short time. Our immune system recognises the protein as foreign and creates antibodies and immune cells as a defence. If the vaccinated person then comes into contact with the real SARS-CoV-2 later, the immune system recognises the spike protein on its outer surface, and can fight back against the virus immediately using the already existing antibodies. It can also rapidly produce large amounts of additional antibodies. This makes an infection with progression to severe disease unlikely.

An information fact sheet for COVID-19 vaccination (mRNA vaccines) in more than 20 languages is available at

[rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Aufklaerungsbogen-Tab.html](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Aufklaerungsbogen-Tab.html)



The vaccine by Novavax (Nuvaxovid®), in contrast, contains spike proteins manufactured in the laboratory, which are injected together with an adjuvant (a substance that increases the immune response). These proteins are recognised by the immune system at the injection site and stimulate the production of antibodies. The influenza vaccines that have been in use for many years are based on the same mechanism.

Information fact sheet for COVID-19 vaccination (protein-based vaccines) in more than 20 languages available at

[www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Proteinimpfstoff-Tab.html](http://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Proteinimpfstoff-Tab.html)

Vaxzevria® by AstraZeneca and Jcovden® by Johnson&Johnson are **vector-based vaccines**. They also don't transport the coronavirus itself, only the genetic material for its spike protein, into the human body. The developers of this vaccine type use a virus that is harmless to humans, and unable to multiply, as a means of transport (vector). Here, too, our own body cells manufacture the spike protein for a short time. The immune system then has suitable antibodies ready to act as a defence against SARS-CoV-2.

An information fact sheet on COVID-19 vaccines (vector-based vaccines) in more than 20 languages is available at [rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Vektorimpfstoff-Tab.html](http://rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Vektorimpfstoff-Tab.html)

**Important:** The protein-based vaccine by Novavax, like the mRNA vaccines, does not contain SARS-CoV2 virus components capable of replication. This means that this new COVID-19 vaccine is also an inactivated (killed) vaccine.

In Germany, the Paul-Ehrlich-Institute (PEI) constantly monitors the safety, efficacy, and the duration of the protective effect of all vaccines used. The Standing Commission on Vaccination (Ständige Impfkommission, STIKO) of the Robert Koch-Institute (RKI) regularly issues updated vaccination recommendations for Germany, which the local health care system uses as a standard.

As with all vaccinations, localised reactions and side effects can occur. Complaints usually appear within hours or days. They rarely last longer than three days. The most common reaction is pain at the injection site. Others are fatigue, headache, chills, and fever. If these complaints last longer than three days, you should seek medical advice. Severe side effects such as allergic reactions, facial paralysis, and thrombosis or coagulation disorders are very rare.

The reason for the recommended age limit 'from age 60' for the vaccines by AstraZeneca and Johnson&Johnson is a very rare but severe side effect (cerebral venous thrombosis) in vaccinated persons younger than 60 years. Adults below age 60 can ask their doctors to provide them with comprehensive advice and risk counselling, and to vaccinate them with these vaccines if they accept their own individual risk and provide their express consent.

## COVID-19 booster vaccination

The Standing Commission on Vaccination recommends a COVID booster vaccination for all persons 12 years and older, to be given from the third full month after base immunisation has been completed.

An mRNA vaccine should be used for the booster vaccination. All persons under 30 years of age and those who are pregnant should only receive the Comirnaty® vaccine for this purpose.

Both currently available mRNA vaccines (Comirnaty® and Spikevax®) are considered suitable for booster vaccinations in people over 30 years of age.

The recommendation for a COVID-19 booster vaccination also applies to pregnant persons from the second trimester, and to persons under 12 years who have already had SARS-CoV-2 infection and have received one vaccine dose afterwards.

A **second booster vaccination** is recommended for persons exposed to particularly high health risks (people from age 70, residents and care recipients of care facilities, people with weakened immune systems from 5 years of age) as well as for personnel in medical and care facilities.

For persons with this risk profile, the second booster vaccination is recommended no earlier than three months after the first booster vaccination.

Personnel in medical and care facilities should receive their second booster no earlier than 6 months after the first booster vaccination.

Persons who have received basic immunisation, or even a booster, with a vaccine that has not been approved for use in the EU (e.g. CoronaVac by Sinovac, Covilo by Sinopharm, Covaxin by Bharat Biotech International Ltd., and Sputnik V by Gamaleja) should receive additional vaccination with an mRNA vaccine for best possible protection (one-off dose no earlier than 3 months after the most recent vaccination). Should infection have occurred after basic immunisation, vaccination should take place after 3 months at the earliest.

Persons who have only received one dose of a non-approved vaccine should receive a full schedule of vaccination doses including boosters with one of the locally approved vaccines.

## Notes on entering the Federal Republic of Germany

Certain provisions apply to people entering Germany. These depend on the level of risk in the region of origin.

Certain regions may be designated virus variant areas. For these, strict regulations regarding registration, proof, and quarantine continue to apply, and short-term bans on entering Germany may be put in place. Information about the countries and regions designated as virus variant areas is available from the regularly updated RKI website at [rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges\\_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete\\_neu.html](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete_neu.html)

A general obligation to provide proof of health status when entering Germany no longer applies (effective 31/05/2022).

A negative PCR test result is required when entering Germany after a previous stay in a virus variant area; proof of vaccination or recovery is not sufficient in this case. Antigen tests are insufficient. The PCR test must be no older than 48 hours.

Those entering Germany after staying in a virus variant area abroad must also observe compulsory quarantine, see below for details.

When entering Germany from a virus variant area, proof of a negative PCR test result, vaccination, or recovery from COVID-19 may be requested by Federal Police or another responsible authority during controls of cross-border traffic into Germany. The authorities conduct random checks of these forms of proof.

If you have stayed in a virus variant area within the last 10 days, you must fill in a digital entry registration form (digitale Einreiseanmeldung, DEA) before entering Germany. You must register your intention to enter Germany by completing the electronic form online at [einreiseanmeldung.de/#/](https://einreiseanmeldung.de/#/)

In addition, **compulsory quarantine** generally applies if you have stayed in a virus variant area. Compulsory quarantine means that, from the time you enter Germany, you must self-isolate at home, in principle 14 days. In certain cases, the quarantine period is shortened. Exceptions from compulsory quarantine apply in certain circumstances. The Federal Ministry of Health (Bundesgesundheitsministerium) provides information about this at <https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/service/gesetze-und-verordnungen/guv-19-lp/coronaeinreisev.html>

If you suspect that you may have been infected with the coronavirus, (see ‚Signs of SARS-CoV-2 infection‘), go and get tested immediately (see ‚Coronavirus testing‘).

## Sources of further information

### For Bavaria:

Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Gesundheit und Pflege

[stmgp.bayern.de/coronavirus](https://stmgp.bayern.de/coronavirus)

Bayerisches Landesamt für Gesundheit und Lebensmittelsicherheit

[lgl.bayern.de/gesundheits/infektionsschutz/infektionskrankheiten\\_a\\_z/coronavirus/faq.htm](https://lgl.bayern.de/gesundheits/infektionsschutz/infektionskrankheiten_a_z/coronavirus/faq.htm)

Bayerisches Staatsministerium des Innern – Katastrophenschutz (civil protection)

[corona-katastrophenschutz.bayern.de](https://corona-katastrophenschutz.bayern.de)

Kassenärztliche Vereinigung Bayern – Arztsuche für Test

(search for doctors who provide testing)

[dienste.kvb.de/arzt suche/app/suchergebnisse.htm?hashwert=a126d5d04b692b-87be6ccbe3b2717826&lat=48.1351253&lng=11.5819805&zeigeKarte=true](https://dienste.kvb.de/arzt suche/app/suchergebnisse.htm?hashwert=a126d5d04b692b-87be6ccbe3b2717826&lat=48.1351253&lng=11.5819805&zeigeKarte=true)

Integrationsbeauftragte der Bayerischen Staatsregierung – multilingual information

[integrationsbeauftragte.bayern.de/downloads](https://integrationsbeauftragte.bayern.de/downloads)

### Germany-wide:

Robert Koch-Institut (RKI) – Pandemie aktuell (pandemic updates)

[rki.de/DE/Home/homepage\\_node.html](https://rki.de/DE/Home/homepage_node.html)

Robert Koch-Institut (RKI) – Impfinformation zu mRNA-Impfstoffen in mehr als 20 Sprachen (vaccination information regarding mRNA vaccines in more than 20 languages)

[rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Aufklaerungsbogen-Tab.html](https://rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Aufklaerungsbogen-Tab.html)

Robert Koch-Institut (RKI) –

Impfinformationen zu Vektorimpfstoffen in mehr als 20 Sprachen (vaccination information regarding vector-based vaccines in more than 20 languages)

[rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Vektorimpfstoff-Tab.html](https://rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/Materialien/COVID-19-Vektorimpfstoff-Tab.html)

Das Auswärtige Amt – Sicherheit von Reisenden (travel security advice)

[auswaertiges-amt.de/de/ReiseUndSicherheit](https://auswaertiges-amt.de/de/ReiseUndSicherheit)

Bundesministerium für Gesundheit – Einreiseanmeldung

(online registration for entry into Germany)

[einreiseanmeldung.de/#/](https://einreiseanmeldung.de/#/)

Bundesministerium für Gesundheit – Zusammen gegen Corona

(together against coronavirus)

[zusammengegencorona.de](https://zusammengegencorona.de)

Integrationsbeauftragte der Bundesregierung – multilingual information

[integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de/staatsministerin/corona/coronavirus-wir-informieren-in-mehreren-sprachen-deutsch--1874222](https://integrationsbeauftragte.de/ib-de/staatsministerin/corona/coronavirus-wir-informieren-in-mehreren-sprachen-deutsch--1874222)

BZgA – mehrsprachige Info (multilingual information)

[infektionsschutz.de/mediathek/printmaterialien/printmaterialien-zum-coronavirus.html](https://infektionsschutz.de/mediathek/printmaterialien/printmaterialien-zum-coronavirus.html)

Ethno-Medizinisches Zentrum e.V. – COVID Alliance Multi-Lingual-Info

[corona-ethnomed.sprachwahl.info-data.info](https://corona-ethnomed.sprachwahl.info-data.info)

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### URL-Verweise:

Für Inhalte externer Seiten, auf die hier verwiesen  
wird, ist der jeweilige Anbieter verantwortlich.

### Datenschutzerklärung

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