

COVID-19 – current situation in Austria, 23.04.2020

Status: 23.04.2020

Tests performed so far: 205 835

Cases confirmed: 14 932

In hospital: 677

Intensive care unit: 169

Persons recovered: 11 694

Deaths: 522

More details: [https://www.sozialministerium.at/Informationen-zum-Coronavirus/Neuartiges-Coronavirus-\(2019-nCov\).html](https://www.sozialministerium.at/Informationen-zum-Coronavirus/Neuartiges-Coronavirus-(2019-nCov).html)

Small shops may open again

Since 14.4.2020, small shops for the sale of goods and craft businesses can reopen under the following conditions:

- Max. 400m² sales area
- Only 1 customer per 20 m²
- Ensuring maximum capacity through inlet control
- Customers and employees must wear a mouth and nose protector
- Regular disinfection must be ensured
- Home improvement and garden centres can also open from 14.4.2020, irrespective of the size of the sales area - the other conditions also apply in this area, of course
- The 400 m² limit applies to the total area of shopping centres.

The safety distance of 1 metre must also be maintained in car parks and garages. Pre-ordered food may be collected from catering establishments if it is not consumed on site and a distance of at least 1 metre is maintained from other persons.

Mouth and nose protection

In all open shops, customers and staff are obliged to wear a mouth and nose protector (MNS).

Similarly, the use of a mouth and nose protection is obligatory on all public transport and when carpooling with people who do not live in the same household. The obligation to wear a mouth-and-nose protector does not apply to children up to the age of six.

Schools and universities still closed; no events at least until June

According to the Federal Government, schools are to remain closed until at least mid-May. Students must continue to study at home. Universities will also be closed until the end of the current semester. No events are allowed until the end of June. The situation will be evaluated in due time for the summer.

Back to normal working routine in medical practices

Under certain conditions, practices can now return to normal working routine adapted to the situation. Routine, check-up, preventive and aftercare examinations and vaccinations can be carried out again, if the measures provided for in the recommendation by the Austrian Medical Chamber are

fulfilled. However, patients should continue to contact the practice by telephone and wear masks in the practice.

Furthermore, the supply of protective clothing in practices of self-employed doctors is still inadequate. The government is urged by the Austrian Medical Chamber to make every effort to provide medical practices with appropriate protective equipment as soon as possible.

Demand for compensation payments for all self-employed doctors

The Austrian Medical Chamber has submitted a package of demands to the government that should continue to ensure the health care of the self-employed sector. The package demands compensation payments for all self-employed doctors under contract with statutory health insurance and without such a contract, amounting to 100 percent of the previous year's turnover in the billing period of the pandemic - minus any other government support and minus reimbursable fees. To date, however, the government has not yet taken any action.

Risk certificate and exemption for workers exposed to coronavirus

Special precautions should be taken for persons who, because of their state of health, are exposed to a higher risk if they become infected with the coronavirus when they are at work. In order to prevent courtesy reports from doctors, clear criteria should be defined who belongs to the risk group. The corresponding law was passed in parliament on 3 April 2020. According to this law, the persons concerned should be informed by the health insurance carrier. Based on this information and after assessing the individual risk situation, the doctor treating the patient will then issue a COVID 19 risk certificate if necessary. With this certificate, the affected persons are then also entitled to exemption from work and continued payment of remuneration, unless home office is possible or the workplace is designed to be particularly low-risk.

The definition of the risk group is carried out by an advisory board established by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Youth. The group of experts, who generally decide whether a person belongs to a risk group, consists of three experts each from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Labour, as well as from the umbrella organisation of social insurance institutions and the Medical Chamber.

However, the relevant risk group criteria or a guide for self-employed doctors have still not been published. Workers and doctors are urgently awaiting results.

Sources:

<https://www.aerztekammer.at/>

<https://www.sozialministerium.at/Informationen-zum-Coronavirus/Coronavirus---Aktuelle-Maßnahmen.html>