

As of April 29, 2020

**Information from the Hessian Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration**

We provide you with the following information about the coronavirus as well as suggest sources where you can obtain additional up-to-date information.

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

On the following pages you can find:

1. General information about the coronavirus
2. What can I do as a precaution to stay healthy?  
What do I do if I have symptoms?
3. Information about obligations to wear masks in Hesse
4. Information about maintaining distance in Hesse
5. Information for people returning from travel and entry into Hesse
6. Information about attending Church services and funerals in Hesse
7. Information for accompanying family during times of birth and death processes in Hesse
8. Information about emergency childcare in Hesse

## **1. General Information**

### **What is the current situation?**

The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) regularly evaluates the significance of the novel virus for public health in Germany. The current risk assessment is published by the RKI at [https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges\\_Coronavirus/Risikobewertung.html;jsessionid=9766CE9E961256ECB36D5D17A325E8F4.internet062](https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikobewertung.html;jsessionid=9766CE9E961256ECB36D5D17A325E8F4.internet062).

**The Hessian government has determined the following for Hesse:** To at least slow down the spread of the coronavirus and not to endanger people, it is necessary to minimize personal contact as much as possible, both in the public and private domain. Further information about obligations to wear masks and maintaining distance is available on the following pages.

### **Where can I find additional information about the coronavirus in Hesse?**

Current information is available on the web page of the Hessian Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration at the following link: [www.hessenlink.de/2019ncov](http://www.hessenlink.de/2019ncov).

The Hessian Ministry for Social Affairs and Integration and the State of Hesse have also set up a free information hotline for Hessian citizens.

- Medical or health issues relating to coronavirus  
Corona Hotline: 0800 555 4 666  
Accessibility: Daily between 8 am to 8 pm

Citizens can also contact their local health authority if they have any questions. Contact information can be found here: <https://tools.rki.de/PLZTool/>.

## **2. What can I do as a precaution to stay healthy?**

As a protective measure, including against influenza, citizens are urged to comply with the following basic hygiene:

- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly (including children and adolescents)
- Cough and sneeze only in a tissue or your elbow (also children and adolescents)
- Use disposable tissues and dispose of them in a waste receptacle after each use
- No handshakes, hugs/cheek kiss
- Do not touch your nose, mouth and eyes (especially after holding handles in buses or using door handles, which are touched by many, but also at home)
- Regularly clean/disinfect your smartphone, mobile phone, tablet, etc.
- Basically, use only your own glasses and cutlery
- Consistently avoid crowds

### **What do I do if I have symptoms?**

If you experience symptoms such as cough, fever or shortness of breath, you should:

- Call **116 -117** (phone number of the medical on-call service)
- Contact the local health department by phone
- Contact your family physician by phone

They will clarify with the inquiring individual whether an infection with the novel coronavirus is likely and if justified they will initiate further diagnosis and treatment.

Additional information also in other languages can be found at:

<https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/coronavirus.html>

Currently, there is a lot of misinformation circulating in social media. Please use the sources listed above for your information.

### **3. Information about obligations to wear masks in Hesse**

As of April 27, 2020, citizens in Hesse must wear mouth and nose protection when using local public passenger transport vehicles or entering shops, weekly markets, bank and post offices, etc. This applies to people six years old and up.

#### **What is a mouth and nose protection?**

Mouth and nose protection include any protection of the mouth and nose which, due to its nature, is appropriate for reducing the spread of transmissible droplet particles or aerosols caused by coughing, sneezing or pronunciation, regardless of a label or certified protection category. In addition to the so-called often hand-made everyday masks, scarves or shawls are also included.

Professional medical masks must be reserved for medical staff.

#### **Keeping distance is still very important**

The contact restrictions and distancing rules are not overridden by wearing an everyday mask.

#### **Exceptions**

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

#### **Fines**

Not wearing a mask is an administrative offense. If citizens do not wear a mask and do not put one on after being addressed can be punished by a EUR 50 fine for a repeated offense.

#### **4. Information on maintaining distance**

Visits to public areas are only permitted alone, with members living in the same household or with **one** person who does not live in their own household. A minimum distance of 1.5 meters must be maintained when encountering other people. Public behavior that is likely to jeopardize this distance requirement, such as joint celebrations, barbecues or picnics, is prohibited, regardless of the number of persons.

Exceptions apply:

- For local public passenger transport
- To accompany and care for minors or persons in need of support
- For holding examinations, state examinations and career examinations
- To donate blood
- Meetings of persons who for the purpose of business, professional, official or care-related reasons must work together
- For meetings and court hearings
- Where appropriate, with a special permit granted by the authorities for funeral ceremonies and burials

#### **5. Information for people returning from travel and entry into Hesse**

**Returning from travel and entry: What should you consider, for example, when returning from vacation?**

In order to prevent new outbreaks of infection caused by those returning from travel and entry into Hesse, a general 14-day confinement period at home will be established for travelers as of April 10, 2020. The regulation also stipulates that those entering Hesse from abroad are obligated to contact the health authority responsible for their place of residence without delay and to inform them of their return. They are also obligated to immediately contact the responsible health office if symptoms of a disease with COVID-19 occur in accordance with the respective criteria of the Robert Koch Institute.

There are exceptions for certain groups of people and professions. Especially for those that are important for the supply of goods to the population, the transport of people or the health care system including for emergency services, such as police officers. Transit or short-term stays in Hesse or abroad are also not covered. Seasonal workers are exempt from the quarantine regulations under certain conditions.

#### **6. Information about attending Church services and funerals**

The observance of distance and hygiene regulations makes it possible to hold church services and religious gatherings again. Even if this will not be in the usual framework, people can jointly live their faith and come together for the Eucharist and Holy Communion.

As of May 4th, church services and religious gatherings will be possible again, if:

- A minimum distance of 1.5 meters between people is maintained. (Only persons living together in the same household are exempt from the minimum distance).
- Items, such as collection baskets are not accepted and then passed on.
- Appropriate hygiene measures are ensured such as placing disinfectant dispensers.
- In addition, the religious communities must display the necessary distance and hygiene measures in a clearly visible manner at the place of assembly.

Gatherings at funeral ceremonies and burials are also possible, provided that the above-mentioned points are observed as the rules of worship.

### **7. Information for accompanying family during times of birth and dying processes**

As of Saturday March 28, 2020, exceptions to the previously applicable rule for visits by close family members may be permitted in individual cases. The facility management, e.g. of the hospital, may, if the treating medical staff considers this necessary for ethical and social reasons, allow the accompaniment of close family members, especially during births or dying processes.

Persons with respiratory infections are excluded from this exemption.

This is an exception from the "second regulation on controlling the coronavirus."

## **8. Information about childcare**

It has been possible to slow down the spread of the virus in Hesse as well. The aim is still to provide the best possible protection for all people, especially the elderly and those who are already ill. That is why the development of new infection chains must be avoided as far as possible. The most effective measure to achieve this is still to reduce personal contact. All existing restrictions follow this principle. For this reason, nurseries and day-care centers will not be accessible until May 10, 2020. Emergency childcare will be continued and extended to other groups of need, for example care groups must be as small as possible to prevent infections, otherwise the measure loses its important effect.

### **How long will kindergarten be discontinued?**

For the time being until May 10th.

### **Can my child continue to be looked after by an in-home daycare provider?**

No, the regulation also applies to these day-care centers. Parents must ensure that the prohibition to enter nurseries and day-care centers is observed.

### **Are there exceptions?**

Yes, there is emergency childcare for specific professional and group of people. The prerequisite for emergency childcare applies to an employed guardian in the following professions:

1. Members of law enforcement, employees of the state at police headquarters and with enforcement tasks
2. Members of fire departments (full-time and voluntary) and works fire departments
3. Staff of the public health service authorities
4. Judges and judiciary public prosecutors
5. Judicial and disciplinary staff
6. Members of emergency services
7. Assistants of the Federal Agency for Technical Relief
8. Assistants of civil protection
9. Employees in health care facilities such as clinics, hospitals and geriatric care facilities, outpatient care and nursing services
10. Employees who work in medical and nursing professions, including:
  - Geriatric nurses
  - Geriatric care helpers
  - Anesthesia technicians

- Doctors
  - Pharmacists
  - Janitors/custodians
  - Nurses and pediatric nurses
  - Midwives
  - Nursing assistants
  - Medical assistants
  - Medical-technical laboratory assistants
  - Medical-technical radiology assistants
  - Medical-technical assistants for function diagnostics
  - Emergency paramedics
  - Surgical assistants
  - Registered nurses
  - Pharmaceutical technical assistants
  - Paramedics according to § 1 of the Paramedics Act
  - Dentists
  - Dental assistants
  - Psychological psychotherapists, child and youth psychotherapists and adolescent psychotherapists
11. Specialists in day-care facilities for children according to § 25 HKJGB
- 11a. Employees in (semi-)inpatient facilities requiring an operating license pursuant to § 45 SGB VIII, which are not day-care facilities for children
- 11b. Persons who provide emergency psychosocial counseling services on a full-time basis, in the field of emergency pastoral care or crisis hotlines, as well as employees of facilities providing protection for persons affected by gender-based violence, particularly women's shelters or shelter housing
- 11c. Persons who provide counseling in accordance with the Pregnancy Conflict Act in recognized pregnancy conflict centers
- 11d. Employees of general social services of public institutions for child and youth welfare
12. Persons who are directly involved in the payment of cash benefits according to SGB II, SGB III, SGB XII, Asylum Seekers Benefits Act

13. Employees in areas of sectors according to the Regulation on Critical Infrastructures with a separate certificate stating that the activity of the person concerned is mandatory, e.g. employees in food retailing, in agricultural production and in the processing, transport and distribution of foods
14. Employees working in waste management, with a separate certificate stating that activity of the legal guardian on site at the workplace is necessary to maintain the infrastructure
15. Full-time employees of the press, radio, television and other telemedia (with proof by employers that on-site work at the workplace is necessary to maintain core operations)
16. Soldiers and employees of the Federal Armed Forces who are required to ensure operational readiness and ongoing deployment of the Federal Armed Forces
17. School management, teaching and support staff directly involved in organizing and conducting school lessons and other school events
18. Working single parents (persons who live with one or more minor children and are solely responsible for their care and education)

Specialists in day-care centers can look after their own children in the day-care center where they work, provided they meet the following infection prevention criteria. The prohibition to enter does not apply to children whose care in a nursery or day-care center is urgently required to ensure the welfare of the child based on a decision by the competent youth welfare office. These children may be looked after in the nursery or day-care center.

The institution may demand proof of affiliation of the above-mentioned groups of persons. In cases of doubt, the competent regulatory agency will decide.

**WARNING:** This exception does not apply if your child or members of the same household:

- Show symptoms of illness
- Have been in contact with infected persons or if 14 days have not yet passed since contact with infected persons
- (This does not apply to children whose parents are in contact with infected persons due to their professional activities in health care)
- Have entered the country by land, sea or air from a country outside the Federal Republic of Germany as of April 10, 2020
- Have previously resided in an area that was designated by the Robert Koch Institute as a risk area for infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus before April 10, 2020 and their entry took place after the date of designation as a risk area, or
- Have entered from those areas within 14 days before the date of designation as a risk area

This applies for a period of 14 days from the date of entry. Parents who place their children in nurseries or day-care centers, although the exception does not apply to them or the infection protection criteria are not fulfilled, are acting contrary to regulations.