

Changes in COVID-19 laboratory testing starting from August 1

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At the end of the transition period set by the Cabinet of Ministers, there will be changes in COVID-19 laboratory testing for adults taking effect from 1 August 2021, stipulating that from here on out testing for the purposes of attending events and receiving various services will be done only for a fee, as per the National Health Service (NHS). Payment for the laboratory test will have to be made according to the price list of paid laboratory services.

In case a patient exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, laboratory testing for epidemiological investigation will continue to be paid from the state budget.* Outside the GP's working hours, patients with symptoms characteristic of COVID-19 infection will be able to do so without a doctor's referral. The NHS draws attention to the fact that from here on out in such cases it will not be possible to create a digital Covid-19 certificate after testing and the individual will only receive a laboratory statement of the results, so that, if necessary, the general practitioner could monitor or treat the patient.

It will be possible to create and use a digital COVID-19 certificate if the individual is:

- vaccinated against COVID-19;
- recovered from COVID-19;
- undergone paid laboratory testing.

The digital COVID-19 certificate will also be created if an individual without COVID-19 symptoms has undergone paid laboratory testing for the purpose of traveling outside the Republic of Latvia.

For children under the age of 18, COVID-19 laboratory testing for attending events and receiving services will be paid from the

state budget until September 1.

As reported before, from 10 June to 1 August 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers had set a transitional period during which laboratory tests for attending events, receiving services and in other cases with the aim of creating a COVID-19 laboratory testing certificate were paid from the state budget. The transition period was set to allow the population to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and then use their vaccination certificates.

At the same time, the NHS reminds that the COVID-19 test is not an alternative to vaccination! A tested person can also become infectious at any time and pose a risk of infection to others. Gatherings between vaccinated or recovered people and non-vaccinated individuals pose a greater risk of the virus being transmitted and circulating than in case of gatherings between solely vaccinated and recovered people. In addition, a vaccinated person is protected against Covid-19 for a long time, while a tested person can only confirm their status at that time.

** Screening testing will continue to be paid from the state budget: for a person accompanying a child, if it is necessary to stay with the child in a hospital; hospitalized patients who undergo long-term care and are not infected with COVID-19 (including patients with mental and psychiatric disorders); in other cases in accordance with the national testing algorithm.*

<https://www.vmnvd.gov.lv/en/article/changes-covid-19-laboratory-testing-starting-august-1>