

## How Vienna gargles out of lockdown

Success model of the PCR testing system in Vienna could be rolled out worldwide

With the initiative „Alles gurgelt“ (engl. “everything gargles“) Vienna got through the pandemic better in comparison to other European countries. Every day, up to 70.000 people participate in the simple gargle PCR testing. This has caught attention to Geneva: The WHO and the ECDC acknowledge the effectiveness of the gargle method, especially in screening asymptomatic individuals. Following the example of Vienna, low-threshold access to PCR tests could also be rolled out in other countries. This will also be necessary to be well prepared for autumn.

Get free test kits from the store, gargle, put it back in the package, bring it to the nearest store and find out the test result within 24 hours. These PCR tests have been part of the Viennese everyday life since January 2021. As part of the initiative „Alles gurgelt“, up to 70.000 individuals participate in the low-threshold opportunity to inquire their Covid-19 status. This is made possible by the Austrian company LEAD Horizon, which developed the high-quality PCR test using a throat rinsing fluid and a web app.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) also draw attention to the effectiveness of these gargle tests in the fight against the disease: They place the saliva sample as equivalent to a nasopharyngeal swab – especially when screening asymptomatic individuals. “Saliva sampling is easy, non-invasive and self-conducted, but it is also proven to be more accurate than antigen testing”, says Prof. Dr. Christoph Steininger. The virologist, infectiologist and internist is co-founder of LEAD Horizon.

### Safe PCR tests for safe school start

Due to the uncomplicated handling and the more precise results in comparison to antigen nose swab tests, school projects are currently running in Vienna, Upper Austria and Slovakia. Based on the success model „Alles gurgelt“ in Vienna, LEAD Horizon has developed a special software for schools in order to be able to master this challenge from autumn onwards.

There are currently 65 schools with a total of 23.000 students participating in Vienna. Further experience is provided by the pilot projects in Lower Austria with 25.000 and in Slovakia with 37.000 school tests.

## Prepared for autumn: „Act instead of react!“

Even though, first steps for life back to normality were taken, due to summer and the progressing vaccination of the population, Prof. Dr. Christoph Steininger warns against again going unprepared into autumn and winter. “It is not over yet! In order to avoid repeating the mistakes of the previous summer, it is important to expand testing strategies and to prevent a further lockdown.”

Regular testing for Covid-19 will continue to play a key role. “It remains valid: Act instead of react to keep schools, retail, tourism and gastronomy open and the intensive care units relieved”, the physician appeals to already look forward to autumn and appropriate (test) strategies.

### „Alles gurgelt“ in detail:

- As part of the initiative “Alles gurgelt”, the city of Vienna provides **free PCR tests**.
- As of June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, a total of **3,1 million samples** have been evaluated since January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021, of which 10.300 were positive.
- This is how it works: Go to the website [www.allesgurgelt.at](http://www.allesgurgelt.at) to get your first barcode to be able to pick up the tests from one of 160 stores in Vienna.
- Gargle/Rinse at home. Everything that needs to be done is to open the web app [lead-horizon.org/public](http://lead-horizon.org/public) and to follow the instructions that are available in eleven languages.
- When the gargle test is completed, it can be handed in more than **620 locations** in Vienna.
- The examination is carried out in cooperating laboratories. The test result can be accessed via web app withing 24 hours of the sample being received in the laboratory.
- More information at [www.allesgurgelt.at](http://www.allesgurgelt.at) and in the video <https://youtu.be/rQ3BiXfKVUE>

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Bild 1: The physician Prof. Dr. Christoph Steininger is co-founder of the Austrian company LEAD Horizon.  
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Bild 2: Gargling instead of nose or throat swabs: The LEAD Horizon self-test determines the Covid-19 status using a throat rinsing fluid guided by instructions in the web app.  
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### **About LEAD Horizon**

*LEAD Horizon is an Austrian company that was founded by Assoc.-Prof. med. Christoph Steininger and Michael Putz. Together with business partners, they have developed the innovative and patent-pending personalized self-test set for determining Covid-19 using a throat rinsing fluid and under the guidance of a web app. With this PCR testing, you offer suitable solutions for companies, culture, sports and private individuals. It is possible to carry out a large number of tests in a low-threshold, time-saving and convenient way. [www.lead-horizon.com](http://www.lead-horizon.com)*

### **Inquiry note**

**Veronika Beck, MA**  
CONSULTANT

t +43 1 890 04 29 – 32  
m +43 664 889 758 29  
[veronika.beck@minc.at](mailto:veronika.beck@minc.at)

**Milestones in Communication**  
Alser Straße 32/19, A-1090 Vienna