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Krankschreibung — Medical Leave in Germany

Medical leave in Germany is mandatory from day 4 of illness and sent electronically to your doctor. Your employer pays 100% of salary for 6 weeks, then health insurance covers approximately 70% of gross income.

Deutsche Begriffe: Krankschreibung | Arbeitsunfähigkeitsbescheinigung | AU | Krankmeldung | Entgeltfortzahlung | eAU | telefonische Krankschreibung | Kinderkrankengeld | Folgebescheinigung

Krankschreibung — Medical Certificate

How does it work?

- 1. Days 1-3** — you can be sick without a certificate (unless your contract requires it earlier)
- 2. From day 4** — you need a Krankschreibung from a doctor (§5 Entgeltfortzahlungsgesetz)
- 3.** Since 2023, the certificate is submitted **electronically (eAU)** — the doctor sends it to Krankenkasse, your employer retrieves it themselves

What do you need to do?

Step 1: Inform your employer

- **IMMEDIATELY** in the morning (phone, SMS, email), before your shift starts
- Provide an estimated duration; you do NOT have to say what you're sick with

Step 2: Go to or call a doctor

- You will receive an Arbeitsunfähigkeitsbescheinigung (AU)
- **Telephone medical certificate** is possible for up to **5 days** for minor illnesses, if you are an established patient of the practice (there is no right to it — the doctor decides)

How much money do you get?

- **Weeks 1-6:** employer pays 100% of salary (Entgeltfortzahlung)
- **From week 7:** Krankenkasse pays Krankengeld — details on amounts and 78 weeks are described in a separate article Krankengeld

The contributions that finance this are discussed in health insurance.

Sick child — Kinderkrankengeld

In 2026: **15 days** per parent and child (single parent — 30), max. 35 days per parent with multiple children (single parent — 70). Child must be under 12 years old. Telephone medical certificate is also possible here for up to 5 days.

Can I leave the house?

YES, if it doesn't harm your health: doctor visit, pharmacy, walk, shopping. NO: work (including remote), sports without recommendation, vacation trip.

△ Krankenkasse may arrange a check (Medizinischer Dienst).

Extension

If you don't recover — go to or call a doctor **before** the end of your current certificate to get a Folgebescheinigung. Remember: illness does not stop notice of termination from your employment contract, but protects you from dismissal "for being sick".