

**AUC COVID-19 Scientific Advisory Committee
Recommendations to Be Applied Until Further Notice
Updated November 2, 2021**

Committee Members

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I. Face Mask, Physical Distance, Cleanliness and Quality

1. Current AUC Guidelines

- a. **Masks: Masks are mandatory in all shared and communal spaces**, including classrooms, corridors, lounges, elevators, dining venues and outdoors when people are **interacting with each other**.
- b. **Social distancing: A social distance of 1.5 meters is applied in all classrooms**, labs, studios and meeting rooms. Physical changes to room layouts may not be made by users.
- c. **Cleanliness: The Office of Integrated Services cleans and disinfects frequently touched surfaces at least twice daily (morning and assembly hour)**. Frequently touched surfaces may include doors, door handles, chair armrests, tabletops, handrails, podiums, light switches, trash receptacles, elevator buttons, drinking fountains, vending machines, etc. Buses are only cleaned once a day in the morning (prior to operation).
- d. **Most AUC students adhere to mask-wearing policies indoors (in classrooms)**.
- e. **In outdoor spaces and elevators, mask-wearing and social distancing policies are often flouted**, posing a risk of transmission. Efforts to tackle this include staff members with megaphones instructing students to wear their masks and follow social distancing guidelines, particularly during assembly hour. Despite recommendations of a maximum occupancy of two people per elevator, this is often not the case. Enforcing social distancing among the AUC community remains a challenge.
- f. **Ninety percent of the AUC community are vaccinated**. The unvaccinated 10% include those under 18 years old and those with medical excuses.
- g. Six hundred and seventy-one (~10%) students live in student accommodation. **This means that approximately 90% live with family members who may or may not be vaccinated**.
- h. **The Center for Learning and Teaching** is providing a teaching track through a **series of workshops titled Active Learning in the Socially Distant Classroom**, which aims to help faculty members create activities and resources within their own discipline or context.

2. Evidence and Guidelines

- a. The results of a 2021 study indicate the **continued importance of social distancing to reduce community transmission until population-wide vaccine coverage is sufficiently high**.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33743846/>
Lancet Infect Dis. 2021 Jul;21(7):962-974
- b. Despite relaxing mask-wearing restrictions in fully vaccinated people, **the CDC recommends the use of masks when engaging in activities with unvaccinated people**.
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html

- c. According to a large recent cohort study on 198,077 U.S. participants regarding associations between social distancing, mask-wearing and risk of COVID-19 infection, those who **self-reported as always using face masks had a 62% reduced risk of predicted COVID-19, including those living in communities where social distancing is poor.**
www.nature.com/articles/s41467-021-24115-7
- d. **Ventilation systems in place indoors and mask-wearing have been found to be very useful in preventing transmission in a classroom setting** using numerical and mathematical models.
<https://aip.scitation.org/doi/10.1063/5.0040755>
- e. The CDC provides detailed information on what masks to wear and how to wear them. **Preferred masks are those that a) have two washable, breathable fabric layers, b) completely cover one's mouth and fit snugly on the sides of one's face and c) have a nose wire to prevent escaping air.** Veiled members of the community, or those with beards, should consider a mask fitter or brace.
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html
- f. Northwestern University provides a detailed protocol on the frequency and scope of cleaning campus surfaces and spaces. **Public spaces, such as elevators and bathrooms (door handles, faucets, toilets), classrooms (desk chairs and surfaces, markers, podiums) and buses (seat surfaces, door rails), are to be cleaned frequently throughout the day. Offices, dining spaces and break rooms are to be cleaned at the end of the day.**
www.northwestern.edu/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/university-status/expectations/guidelines/cleaning-disinfecting-hygiene/guidelines-procedures.html
- g. Strategies exist to address the issue of social distancing in face-to-face classrooms that maintain the quality of higher learning. Northwestern University provides such a template of **alternative class activities in socially distant classrooms that provide a similar level of educational quality to traditional face-to-face classrooms.**
<https://digitallearning.northwestern.edu/sites/digitallearning/files/Active%20Learning%20while%20Physical%20Distancing.pdf>

3. Committee Recommendations

- a. **Masks: A continuation of the mask-wearing mandate, both indoors and outdoors,** is recommended to ensure a very low-risk environment for AUC community members and their larger social circles. Spare masks should be made available around the campus.
- b. **Social distancing: The current social distancing measures in classrooms should be upheld.** Social distancing in the classroom does not interfere with the quality of face-to-face education and, together with mask-wearing, offers additional protection from COVID-19 infection.

- c. **Cleanliness: Increase the frequency of cleaning surfaces in classrooms, toilets, elevators and buses to at least three times a day (morning, assembly hour and around 3:00 pm).** Current guidelines state that these areas are cleaned at least twice a day. Surfaces should be cleaned frequently during peak hours. Hand sanitizer bottles should be refilled as frequently as possible.
- d. **Elevators: The guidelines for elevators should be upheld: two mask-wearing passengers per elevator ride.** Avoid touching the elevator buttons with exposed hands or fingers when possible. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer upon departing the elevator. The possibility of adjusting the elevator overload sensor to permit only two individuals per ride may be investigated.
- e. **Awareness:** Posters (large, colorful) on mask-wearing and social distancing should be placed in classrooms and public spaces. Additionally, place posters in the elevators (for example, Two's Company, Three's a Crowd).

II. Contact Tracing

1. Current AUC Guidelines

- a. Contact cases within a classroom: The entire class is notified and asked to get an antigen test. Contact cases are not allowed to access campus until they test negative.
- b. Contact cases outside the classroom: AUC community members who were within a 2-meter distance of a possibly infected individual for a period of 15 minutes or longer are notified that they should self-isolate for one week or until the individual they were in contact with gets a negative PCR test result.
- c. If the suspected case tests positive for COVID-19, contacts are asked to self-isolate for one week and get tested (PCR/antigen) on the fourth day from exposure. However, if contacts show symptoms, they should seek medical advice and contact the AUC clinic immediately. **If contacts test positive or show symptoms, they are asked to self-isolate for two weeks.** If contacts test negative and do not show any COVID-19 symptoms, they are allowed to access campus.

2. Evidence and Guidelines

- a. Current CDC [Guidelines \(Considerations for Case Investigation and Contact Tracing in K-12 Schools and Institutions of Higher Education \(IHEs\) | CDC\)](#)
- b. [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation | CDC](#)

3. Committee Recommendations

- a. Advise students and faculty to have their WiFi-enabled devices at all times while on campus.
- b. Several tools and applications may be assessed for contact tracing, including Go.Data, NOVID, Covid Watch and COVIDWISE.
- c. For a positive case in a class, contacts within 2 meters of the infected person for 15 minutes or longer (as identified by contact tracing), including the faculty member, should get an antigen test. If contact tracing is not feasible at this time, then the recommendation is to continue testing the whole class.

- d. Faculty members and managers should report positive cases in their classes or departments to the clinic by email (medicalserv@aucegypt.edu) and telephone (t +2.012.8000.1039). Additionally, the infected individual should report the symptoms via the [Health Self-Check](#) page.
- e. Contacts who are unvaccinated, fully vaccinated or have a history of positive COVID-19 illness during the previous three months should self-isolate immediately, monitor their symptoms and get an antigen test on the fourth day from contact or exposure:
 - i) If the test results are negative:
 - 1) Vaccinated community members can return to campus immediately.
 - 2) Unvaccinated community members can return to campus after seven days from contact or exposure if no symptoms appear on the seventh day.
 - ii) If symptoms appear or the contact tests positive, the community member should inform the AUC clinic and self-isolate immediately for 10 days from exposure or contact. The community member may be allowed back on campus once they get a negative PCR test result. **III. Diagnostic, Screening and Surveillance Testing**

1. Current AUC Guidelines

- a. RT-PCR tests are offered to symptomatic individuals.
- b. All unvaccinated community members are required to get a weekly antigen test in order to access campus. With limited exceptions, individuals cover the cost (EGP 350) of the weekly tests either through payroll deduction (faculty and staff) or having the charge added to the student account. Exceptions are as follows: staff levels 1-6 pay EGP 50, staff levels 7-11 pay EGP 100 and scholarship students do not pay for testing.
- c. Contact cases are required to get an antigen test before being allowed to access campus. If positive, they are then required to get a PCR test before returning to campus. The University covers the cost of the test for contact cases.
- d. Surveillance testing of the entire population, as well as wastewater sources, is currently not done.

2. Evidence and Guidelines

- a. *U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, ED COVID-19 Handbook, Volume 1: Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools, Washington, D.C., 2021.*
www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening.pdf
- b. www.nature.com/articles/s41576-021-00360-w
- c. apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/342002/WHO-2019-nCoV-lab-testing-2021.1-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

3. Committee Recommendations

- a. Continue the current practice of weekly antigen testing for AUC community members who are unvaccinated due to medical reasons, age or choice.
- b. **All** visitors who need to access the campus should get an antigen test. Security should be alerted to enforce this rule. If testing all visitors is not feasible, then a certificate of vaccination should be requested (to be uploaded to the system or sent to security together with the request to permit entry).
- c. Screening testing should be offered to:
 - i. All students who are not fully vaccinated when community transmission is at moderate, substantial or high levels (i.e., stages 2, 3 and 4; check the multistage approach).
 - ii. All faculty and staff members who are not fully vaccinated at any level of community transmission.
 - iii. All visitors to AUC's campuses.
 - iv. Random screening testing more than once a week might be more effective at interrupting transmission, especially from asymptomatic individuals. This may include a random sample of at least 10% of students who are not fully vaccinated or conducting pooled testing of cohorts (to reduce testing cost).
 - v. Large-scale testing of asymptomatic individuals is not recommended due to a lack of evidence on impact and cost-effectiveness.

“Testing of asymptomatic individuals with NAAT or Ag-RDTs is currently recommended only for specific groups including contacts of confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases and frequently exposed groups such as health care workers and long-term care facility workers. Widespread screening of asymptomatic individuals is not a currently recommended strategy due to the significant costs associated with it and the lack of data on its operational effectiveness” WHO Guidelines, June 2021 (see above 2C).

IV. Vaccines

1. Current AUC Guidelines and Status

- a. 90% vaccinated with the following breakdowns:
 - i. Students: 89% vaccinated, 1% medically exempt, 6% under 18 years old
 - ii. Full-time faculty: 97% vaccinated, 2% medically exempt
 - iii. Part-time faculty: 87% vaccinated, 3% medically exempt
 - iv. Staff: 95% vaccinated, 2% medically exempt
- b. It should be noted that different vaccines are offered in Egypt, including Johnson & Johnson, Sputnik, Sinopharm/Sinovac, Pfizer and AstraZeneca. The efficacy of some of the offered vaccines is not published.

2. Evidence and Guidelines

- a. In general, people are considered fully vaccinated:
 - i. Two weeks after their second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines
 - ii. Two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine
- a. A combination of vaccines and social distance should provide greater benefits than if applied separately. Prioritize vaccines for the elderly and social distance for adults.

“PLOS Computational Biology,” August 2021 “ The interplay between vaccination and social distancing strategies affects COVID19 population-level outcomes“
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pcbi.1009319>
- c. For fully vaccinated individuals:
 - i. To reduce the risk of infection with the Delta variant and possibly spreading it to others, individuals should **wear a mask** indoors in public if they are in an area of substantial or high transmission.
 - ii. Individuals might choose to **wear a mask** regardless of the level of transmission if a) they have a weakened immune system, b) they are at increased risk for severe disease because of age or an underlying medical condition or c) a member of their household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease or is unvaccinated.
 - iii. Upon close contact with someone who has COVID-19, individuals should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they do not have symptoms. They should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative. They should self-isolate for 10 days if their test result is positive.
 - iv. Individuals should still watch out for COVID-19 symptoms, especially if they have been around someone who is sick. If COVID-19 symptoms develop, they should get tested and stay home and away from others. If the test is positive, isolate at home for 10 days.

- v. People who have a medical condition or are taking medications that weaken the immune system should continue to take all precautions recommended for unvaccinated people until advised otherwise by their health care provider.
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html
- vi. Booster dose and flu vaccine: A booster dose of COVID-19 vaccination is not recommended (except for specific populations and those above 60 years old).
www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-authorizes-booster-dose-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-certain-populations
- vii. Flu vaccination is recommended:
www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-90068-y
- viii. Both flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered:
www.medscape.com/viewarticle/958848

2. **Committee Recommendations**

- a) It is highly recommended to encourage community members to take the flu vaccination.
- b) Currently, there is no need for a booster dose. However, AUC may consider offering a booster dose next semester for faculty and staff members who are 60 years of age and older.

V. Guidelines for Faculty to Report COVID-19 Cases in a Class

If a faculty member suspects a COVID-19 case in a class or a student reports having COVID-19 symptoms, these are the procedures to be followed:

1. The faculty member emails the Office of Medical Services at medicalserv@aucegypt.edu.
2. The subject should be "Reporting a COVID-19 Case and AUC ID."
3. The email should include the student's name, ID, email and phone number.
4. The clinic will contact the case, conduct the necessary medical investigations and send an email to the Office of the Dean of Students.
5. The Office of the Dean of Students will send the faculty member an email with the isolation period.
6. If the case turns out to be positive, the Office of the Dean of Students will ask the faculty member for a list of attendees and TAs for the classes attended.
7. The Office of the Dean of Students communicates the list of attendees to the Office of Medical Services.
8. The Office of Medical Services emails the faculty member and the attendees with the necessary medical procedures regarding the testing details and returning to campus.
9. The faculty member informs their students that all sessions scheduled over the following three weekdays will be online (to allow time for COVID-19 testing).
10. Face-to-face classes should resume after **the message with the instructions**, even if some students are unable to attend because of late test results or loss of access to campus.
11. If the three days elapse without **receiving a message**, resume classes on campus as usual without a testing requirement.

VI. Multistage Approach

Adapted from: [Institutes of Higher Education \(IHE\): COVID-19 - Minnesota Department of Health \(health.state.mn.us\)](#)

Stage 1 – Indicators for low transmission levels (green)

Transmission levels are seen as manageable by the individual institution.

- Cases reported among AUC community members who are routinely on campus comprise less than 1% of the campus community (rolling average of **seven cases per day** based on an estimated campus population of 10,000 people) over a two-week period.
- Cases are mostly confined to a specific group or place.
- The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population’s dashboard does not show a significant rising trend.

Action Plan

Those affected are counseled, quarantined or isolated as appropriate (see recommendations above). Affected areas are contained, isolated and decontaminated. University medical staff monitor for possible escalation. All other campus operations remain unaffected.

- Restrict outside access to dorms and residence halls.
- Work with off-campus housing, where possible, to consider limits to visitation.
- Limit access to indoor sports facilities and AUC buses to vaccinated individuals.
- Perform extensive maintenance and cleaning of all air-conditioning units.
- Limit cocurricular activities (indoors and outdoors) to 150 people per event. Approval may be granted on a case-by-case basis.

Stage 2 – Indicators for medium transmission levels (yellow)

Transmission levels are beginning to increase on campus.

Strongly consider implementing the suggested mitigation efforts if **two or more** of the following indicators are met:

- Positive cases reported among AUC community members (students, faculty and staff) who are routinely on campus comprise 1-3% of the campus population over a two-week period (rolling average of **8-21 cases per day** based on an estimated campus population of 10,000 people). Also, consider the setting where cases are being reported when using this indicator. Is it mostly confined to a specific group and could be contained?
- Other internal metrics show concerning signs, such as increased absenteeism among faculty or staff.
- The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population’s dashboard reaches a moderate community transmission level.

Action Plan

AUC administration may consider implementing any of the following:

General Recommendations

- Promote the importance of monitoring and reporting symptoms ([Health Self-Check](#)).
- Cancel indoor cocurricular activities and events.

- Cancel cocurricular activities, clubs and organizations, and move them online whenever possible.
- Revoke campus access to individuals who do not comply with mask-wearing guidelines in any of AUC's facilities (especially **buses**). Request those individuals get antigen tests before they are allowed back on campus. Ambassadors may be assigned to buses to enforce the mask-wearing policy. **Elevators** should also be adjusted to limit passengers to two per ride.
- Re-examine mask-wearing and social distancing guidelines and policies based on the campus operations and a careful review of cases.
- **Cancel or reduce assembly hour.**

Athletics and Recreational Programs

- Cancel indoor athletic activities.
- .
- Allow only individual development and exercise for athletes.

Academic Programming

- Faculty members should be prepared to continue teaching students who are in quarantine or isolation via alternative learning options to ensure academic continuity for students at any point in the semester. Academic policies should accommodate these situations.

Stage 3 – Indicators for high transmission levels (orange)

Transmission levels have further depleted or exhausted institutional resources.

8. Increased case activity may be occurring on campus, in the community or both. Strongly consider implementing the suggested mitigation efforts **if two or more** of the following indicators are met:
 - The number of infections continues to rise for the two weeks after Stage 2 mitigation efforts were put in place.
 - Clusters of cases are not confined to one specific group; cases are increasing across the whole campus population.
 - Cases reported among AUC community members who are routinely on campus comprise more than 3% of the community over a two-week period (rolling average of more than **21 cases per day** based on an estimated campus population of 10,000 people).
 - The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population's dashboard reaches a substantial or high community transmission level.

Action Plan

Campuses reaching this level likely either have low vaccine coverage among students, faculty and staff or are experiencing increased transmission due to a variant against which vaccines are not as effective.

General Considerations

- Monitor and maintain proper inventories of critical supplies (e.g., cleaning and disinfectant agents, hand sanitizers and personal protective equipment supplies).

Communication

- Update on-campus community members regularly about case levels.
- Review plans to cease face-to-face classes if Stage 4 must be activated.
- Plan social media outreach, monitoring and response.

Academic Programming

- Move classes online for a period of two weeks, with the exception of classes with strong justification to run face to face. Only students registered in face-to-face classes will be given ID access to campus.
- Consider designated spaces on campus with a reliable internet connection for students to join online classes.

Residential Life and Dining

- Consider allowing some students to move home for online instruction, and reduce the number of students in residential facilities to one person per room.
- Consider offering more to-go options and limiting the number of people allowed in the dining facilities at any one time.

Information Technology

- Provide access to loanable computers, including desktops, laptops, tablets, etc.
- Provide remote access to computer labs, and check the availability of WiFi hotspots.

Athletics and Recreational Programs

- Cancel **all** programs including outdoor activities, and close facilities.

Campus Operations and Maintenance

- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting on campus.
- Consider modifying or limiting the hours of operation (especially for areas where students tend to gather or cluster).
- Continue to monitor and enforce social distancing guidelines.
- Ensure compliance with the University's policies and procedures.

Stage 4 – Sustained high transmission levels (red)

- The mitigation efforts mentioned above did not result in a significant improvement over a two-week period after **Stage 3** had been put in place (more than 3% of individuals accessing campus over a two-week period test positive).
- The Egyptian government has ordered the closure of universities.
- Close the campus and move classes and activities online only until the following semester or after a semester break.

VII. Other Recommendations

- Set up separate COVID-19 dashboards for AUC New Cairo and AUC Tahrir Square.
- Student Counseling Services. The Center for Student Wellbeing and the Psychology Clinic may consider approaches to make their services on stress management more visible to students and offer services over extended hours either F2F or virtually.
- Ask campus visitors to present evidence of vaccination.
- Contact tracing should be more efficient. The feasibility of adopting Bluetooth wristbands may be investigated.
 9. <https://accent-systems.com/solutions/contact-tracing/>
- The number of AUC clinic staff members may be increased to support the timely follow-up of positive cases and contacts.
- Face masks should be made available across campus — for free if possible.
- Chairs and deans are advised to report hospitalized staff, faculty and students who report self-isolation to the clinic and the Office of the Dean of Students.
- Ensure students have access to loanable computers and WiFi hotspots.
- Monitor faculty and staff absences and the number of courses moved online either due to faculty absence or a critical mass of students testing positive.
- Request a workflow chart that depicts the process from the clinic's side, explaining how daily contact tracing reports are used and what happens end to end (clinic and IT sides).
- The committee will continuously monitor national and international updates on the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee will meet regularly on Sundays at 1:00 pm to discuss any developments and advise administration accordingly.

Multistage Approach

<p>Stage 1 – Indicators for low transmission levels (green)</p>	<p>Transmission levels are seen as manageable by the individual institution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cases reported among AUC community members who are routinely on campus comprise less than 1% of the campus community (rolling average of 7 cases/day based on an estimated campus population of 10,000 people) over a two-week period. • Cases are mostly confined to a specific group or place. • The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population’s dashboard does not show a significant rising trend.
<p>Stage 2 – Indicators for medium transmission levels (yellow)</p>	<p>Transmission levels are beginning to increase on campus. Strongly consider implementing the suggested mitigation efforts if two or more of the following indicators are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive cases reported among AUC members (students, faculty and staff) who are routinely on campus comprise 1-3% of the campus community over a two-week period (rolling average of 8-21 cases/day based on an estimated campus population of 10,000 people). Also, consider the setting where cases are being reported when using this indicator. Is it mostly confined to a specific group and able to be contained? • Other internal metrics show concerning signs, for example, increased absenteeism among faculty or staff. • The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population’s dashboard reaches a moderate community transmission level.
<p>Stage 3 – Indicators for high transmission levels (orange)</p>	<p>Increased case activity may be occurring on campus, in the community or both. Strongly consider implementing the suggested mitigation efforts if two or more of the following indicators are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of infections continues to rise for the two weeks after Stage 2 mitigation efforts were put in place. • Clusters of cases are not confined to one specific group; cases are increasing across the total campus population. • Cases reported among AUC members who are routinely on campus comprise more than 3% of AUC community over a two-week period (rolling average of >21 cases/day based on an estimated campus population of 10,000 people). • The Egyptian Ministry of Health and Population’s dashboard has reached a substantial or high community transmission level.

Stage 4 – Sustained high transmission levels (red)

- The above mitigation efforts did not result in a significant improvement over a two-week period after **Stage 3** had been put in place (>3% of individuals accessing campus over a two-week period test positive).
- The Egyptian government has ordered the closure of universities.
- Close campus and move instruction and activities online only until the next semester or after a semester break.

APPENDIX

Egypt COVID-19 Dashboard (WHO); November 1, 2021

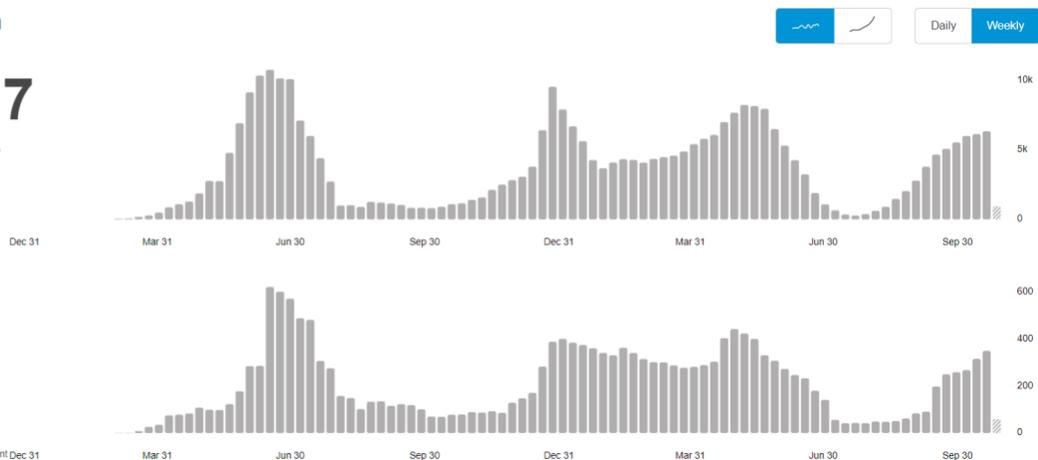
<https://covid19.who.int/region/emro/country/eg>

Egypt Situation

331,017
confirmed cases

18,651
deaths

Source: World Health Organization
Data may be incomplete for the current Dec 31 day or week.



Daily Cases in Egypt (Worldometer); November 2, 2021

www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/egypt/

