

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

# Coronavirus COVID-19

## – Latest Updates

**Updated on 9 March at 16:10 am**

At the beginning of the year, an epidemic caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19 began in China.

So far, approximately 110,000 infections have been diagnosed worldwide.

We will update this page with the latest information on the spread of the virus and with instructions for preventing infection.

### Epidemic areas

- The epidemic area currently covers **mainland China, Iran, South Korea, Italy, ski resorts in Tyrol, Austria and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany**. The situation is nevertheless subject to ongoing assessment.
- Check the Ministry for Foreign Affairs website for the latest [travel advisories](#) (in Finnish). There you can find important information about travelling abroad and instructions on how to submit a travel report.

### The situation in Finland

- So far, 30 laboratory-confirmed cases caused by the new coronavirus (COVID-19) have been diagnosed in Finland. Of these, 23 are related to tourism and seven secondary

infections.

- All of the cases diagnosed in Finland have been mild. Some have also required hospital care.
- It is important to investigate the possibility of the coronavirus infection in all persons who meet the sampling criteria mentioned in THL's instructions for health care. As of 9 March 2020, samples from approximately 650 patients meeting the criteria have been examined in Finland.
- The cases are divided by hospital district as follows (descending according to reported numbers):
  - Helsinki and Uusimaa Hospital District (HUS): 17
  - Pirkanmaa Hospital District (PSHP): 5
  - Kanta-Häme Hospital District (KHSHP): 2
  - North Savo Hospital District (PSSHP): 1
  - South Karelia Social and Health Care District (Eksote): 1
  - Northern Ostrobothnia Hospital District (PPO): 1
  - Lapland Hospital District (LSPH): 1
  - Päijät-Häme Hospital District (PHHYKY): 1
  - Southwest Finland Hospital District (VSSHP): 1
- It is likely that in Finland there will be further cases resulting from tourism and other international travel and from secondary infections.
- Rapid identification of cases is important so that effective control measures can be implemented to reduce the risk of further infections. Finnish hospitals are well prepared for examining and treating coronavirus infections in isolation.
- Finland is also preparing for a wider epidemic.

## The situation in Europe

- Over **11,700** cases have been diagnosed in Europe.
- The number of cases in Europe has been increasing since the end of February.
- In Italy, more than 7300 cases have been recorded so far. The number of new cases in Italy has increased significantly over the last few days. THL has defined all of Italy as an epidemic area as from 3 March. The Italian Government has imposed mobility restrictions on large areas of northern Italy. You have to obtain permission to travel or to leave the areas in question.
- Travelling in the epidemic area involves a high risk of infection.
- In France, more than 1000 cases have already been reported, and in Germany the total already exceeds 900. In Spain, Switzerland, Great Britain and the Netherlands, among others, a lot of new cases and related secondary infections have been reported.
- Increasing numbers of infections are being detected in the Nordic countries. There have been over 200 cases reported in Sweden and around 170 cases in Norway.
- A summary of cases diagnosed in Europe [on the ECDC website](#).
- [Numbers of cases in the European countries](#) (WHO)

## Epidemic situation elsewhere in the world

- The epidemic is unfolding in South Korea, for example, where more than 7 300 cases have been diagnosed, and also in Iran, where more than 6 500 cases have been reported.
- The majority of the total number of reported infections are still within China.

- There has been a decline in the number of cases in China. In recent days, China has reported only around 100-200 new cases per day.
- So far, more than 3 800 people have died from the virus, with the majority of these deaths (3100) occurring in China.
- [Number of cases in different countries](#) (WHO)

## What do we know about the novel coronavirus?

- The virus mainly spreads from person to person through droplet transmission in close contact. The incubation time, which is the time from the exposure to the first symptoms, is estimated to be approximately 2-12 days, on average approximately 4-5 days. How efficiently the virus spreads and the period of infectiousness are not yet well known.
- The patients' symptoms include fever, coughing and shortness of breath.
- So far, approximately 80% of the reported cases have been mild and the patients have recovered. The disease has been more severe in approximately 14% of the patients, causing symptoms such as pneumonia and/or shortness of breath, and 6% of the patients have been in a critical condition.
- The mortality rates of the disease are difficult to estimate. All asymptomatic and milder cases may not have been detected and reported. A comparison of mortality rates between different countries may provide a misleading picture of what the actual mortality rate currently is or will be if the epidemic spreads.
- Similarly, it is also difficult to estimate the number of people who have recovered from the disease. Different countries interpret the recovery criteria differently, and

Finland, for example, does not provide information to the public on the health status of patients for reasons of privacy.

- The largest number of severe cases and deaths have been recorded in people aged over 70 who already have an underlying disease such as diabetes, high blood pressure or a cardiovascular disease. People aged over 80 have the highest risk.
- The number of cases diagnosed in children and young people has been low and their symptoms have been mild. Only approximately 2% of all reported cases have been diagnosed in people aged under 19. The disease has been severe in only a very small proportion of young people.
- The novel coronavirus is likely to have originated from an individual infection from an animal to a person, after which the virus has started to spread between people. However, which animal was the source of the infections is not yet known.
- Coronaviruses have been identified both in people and in animals. They usually cause a mild respiratory infection. Serious cases have previously been caused by the SARS and MERS coronaviruses. The new coronavirus is genetically similar to the SARS coronavirus.
- Coronavirus infections can be prevented with good hand hygiene. Instructions: [Hand washing and coughing](#)

## International risk assessment

- The ECDC and WHO regularly update their assessment of the situation. THL is monitoring the international situation, developing guidelines for health care and laboratories, assessing the health risks related to the coronavirus and drawing up assessments of how the situation with the virus may develop.
- According to the ECDC's estimation,

the risk of COVID-19 coronavirus infection in the EU countries is currently moderate. Travelling in the epidemic area involves a high risk of infection.

- [The World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has declared the new coronavirus found in the city of Wuhan in China a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).
- [The World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) is not recommending any specific measures to tourists nor any restrictions on travel or international trade.
- [COVID-19 \(ECDC\)](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(WHO\)](#)

## More information

- [Information about the disease: novel coronavirus](#) (in Finnish)
- [Frequently asked questions about the novel coronavirus](#) (in Finnish)

## Guidelines for tourists

- Check the Ministry for Foreign Affairs website for [the latest travel advisories](#) (in Finnish). There you can find important information about travelling abroad and instructions on how to submit a travel report.
- [Instructions for people travelling in the epidemic area](#)
- [Instructions for passengers arriving in Finland](#)
- [Global cases of COVID-19](#) (Johns Hopkins CSSE)
- [COVID-19 situation in the WHO European Region](#) (WHO)

## THL guidelines for health care

[Instructions for the novel coronavirus incidents](#)

(THL)

Laboratory studies of the  
novel coronavirus

(THL)

 [Print](#)

## WHAT'S NEW

9 Mar 2020

Coronavirus situation has changed  
– Tyrol in Austria and the state of  
North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany  
are now part of the epidemic area

6 Mar 2020

Three new coronavirus infections  
diagnosed in Finland

4 Mar 2020


Corona virus is transmitted in  
everyday life through respiratory  
droplets and direct contact

4 Mar 2020

Coronavirus situation has changed  
– Finnish Institute for Health and  
Welfare has updated its instructions  
regarding Italy

27 Feb 2020

Coronavirus case diagnosed in the  
Hospital District of Helsinki and  
Uusimaa

[See all news on Coronavirus COVID-  
19](#) 

## MORE INFORMATION

- [Information about the disease:  
novel coronavirus \(in Finnish\)](#)
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