

INFECTIOUS DISEASES 

Coronavirus COVID-19

– Latest Updates

Updated on 11 March at 13:50.

At the beginning of the year, an epidemic caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19 began in China. So far, over 118,000 cases have been diagnosed globally. Infections have been reported by 114 countries.

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

Epidemic areas

- Epidemic areas are defined as those where more extensive chains of infection are being seen. Currently, the epidemic areas cover **mainland China, Iran, South Korea, Italy, the ski resorts in Tyrol in Austria, and the state of North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany.**
- Travelling in the epidemic area involves a high risk of infection.
- The situation in Europe and North America has changed rapidly in recent days. This should also be taken into account when making travel decisions.
- 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, 59 laboratory-confirmed cases caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) have been diagnosed in Finland.
- Most of the cases diagnosed in Finland have been mild. Some those infected have also required hospital care.
- By 11 March 2020, samples from nearly 900 patients meeting the criteria have been examined in Finland.
- The cases can be divided by hospital district as follows (in alphabetical order):
 - South Karelia Social and Health Care District (Eksote): 1
 - Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia (EPSHP): 1
 - Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS): 32
 - Kanta-Häme Hospital District (KHSHP): 4
 - Central Finland Health Care District (KSSHP): 4
 - Lapland Hospital District (LSPH): 1
 - Pirkanmaa Hospital District (PSHP): 9
 - North Karelia Hospital District (PKSSK): 1
 - Northern Ostrobothnia Hospital District (PPO): 1
 - North Savo Hospital District (PSSHP): 2
 - Southwest Finland Hospital District (VSSHP): 3
- 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.

- The increase of cases in Europe suggests that more infections will probably be identified in Finland in the next few days as well.
- Finland is also preparing for a wider epidemic.

The situation in Europe

- A total of over 18,000 cases have been diagnosed in Europe.
- In Italy, more than 10,000 cases have been diagnosed so far.
- The number of new cases in Italy has increased significantly over the last few days. The average age of patients in the reported cases (median) has been 65 years, and elderly people with several underlying diseases in particular have been among those who have died.
- On 8 March, the Italian Government imposed mobility restrictions on large areas of northern Italy. On 10 March, the Italian Government extended these restrictions to cover the whole country and issued a ban on organising mass events. In addition, institutions such as schools and universities have been closed. The health care system of Italy is overburdened by this situation.
- The number of cases is increasing in many European countries. For example, more than 1,700 cases have been reported in France, over 1,600 in Spain and nearly 1,300 in Germany. Hundreds of cases have also been reported in Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.
- In the Nordic countries, Sweden, Norway and Denmark have reported a significant number of cases within the last week. For example, Sweden has reported more than 320 cases in total.
- The Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten) notified on 10 March that there are signs of the coronavirus spreading in the communities in the Stockholm region

and the province of Western Götaland (Gothenburg).

- The situation in Europe is changing rapidly. In particular, the situation in the Nordic countries is being monitored and assessed closely.
- 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 7,700 cases have been diagnosed, and also in Iran, where more than 8,000 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 and the epidemic seems to be relenting. In the past few days, China has reported only a few dozens of new cases per day.
- So far, nearly 4,300 people have died from the virus, with the majority of these deaths, – over 3,100 – 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 virus can survive on surfaces and can also be transmitted as a contact infection by handling materials or surfaces contaminated with the sputum of an infected person. Nevertheless, this is not considered the main route of infection.
- In everyday life, you can reduce your

risk of infection by maintaining good hand hygiene.

- 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.
- According to the World Health Organisation WHO, over 70% of the over 80,000 infected people in China have recovered.
- 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 face 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 high. Travelling in the epidemic area involves a high risk of infection.
- On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the new coronavirus epidemic 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)

WHAT'S NEW

12 Mar 2020

Coronavirus infection now a risk in many countries – efforts being made to slow the start of the epidemic in Finland

11 Mar 2020

If you are at all unwell, ring your grandparents instead of visiting

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

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

MORE INFORMATION

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

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