

INFECTIOUS DISEASES 

## Coronavirus COVID-19

### – Latest Updates

**Updated on 13 March at 13:30.**

At the beginning of the year, an epidemic caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19 began in China. So far, over 130,000 cases have been diagnosed globally. A total of 123 countries have reported infections.

### Epidemic areas

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus epidemic a pandemic on 11 March 2020.
- Epidemic areas are defined as those where more extensive chains of infection are being seen. The epidemic situation in Europe and North America has been changing rapidly and as a result, the classification of countries and territories as epidemic areas will be abandoned. The risk of coronavirus infection has increased throughout Europe and around the world.
- THL is monitoring and assessing the situation together with the European Centre for Disease Prevention (ECDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- THL will provide information and instructions as the situation develops and is currently updating the instructions and material on the basis of new information.

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, 155 laboratory-confirmed cases caused by the new 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.
- Confirmed cases can be divided by hospital district as follows (in alphabetical order):
  - South Karelia Social and Health Care District (Eksote): 2
  - Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia (EPSHP): 2
  - Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS): 69
  - Kanta-Häme Hospital District (KHSHP): 10
  - Central Finland Health Care District (KSSHP): 12
  - Lapland Hospital District (LSPH): 1
  - Pirkanmaa Hospital District (PSHP): 17
  - North Karelia Hospital District (PKSSK): 1
  - Northern Ostrobothnia Hospital District (PPO): 19
  - North Savo Hospital District (PSSHP): 2
  - Satakunta Hospital District: 7
  - Vaasa Hospital District (VSHP): 1
  - Southwest Finland Hospital District (VSSH): 12
- We publish the statistics every day with the laboratory-confirmed cases reported by the hospital districts. There may be some delay in the

numbers reported daily. All of the cases reported on the previous day are not necessarily included in the daily statistics. The reported number of cases is grouped by the hospital district of the infected person. If no information on the municipality of residence is available, the result is assigned to the area of the hospital district that took the sample.

- It is important for people with mild symptoms to see it through at home and to avoid social contact with others. Reducing social contact is also important for healthy people, as this slows down the spread of the epidemic.
- The Finnish Government recommends cancelling all public events with more than 500 participants until 31 May. The organisers of other gatherings are also recommended to conduct their own risk assessments and make decisions on organising similar events. Also see [Government recommendations for workplaces and close contact](#).
- Finland is preparing for a wider epidemic. The speed at which the epidemic develops will most likely vary across the country.
- In areas where there are signs of the spread of the epidemic, the focus should be on protecting risk groups, i.e. the elderly and people with underlying conditions.
- Rapid identification of cases continues to be important in order to slow down the progress of the epidemic. Effective prevention measures and the prevention of secondary infections can reduce the spread of the virus especially among the elderly and those with underlying conditions.
- Direct conclusions for the situation in Finland or its development cannot be drawn from the epidemic situations in other countries.
- Finnish hospitals are well prepared

for examining and treating coronavirus infections in isolation.

## The situation in Europe

- The coronavirus situation in Europe is changing rapidly, and numbers are expected to rise.
- Over 29,000 cases have been diagnosed in Europe.
- The majority of the cases in Europe have been recorded in Italy, over 15,000 in total.
- A large number of infections have also been reported in the Nordic countries.
- We are particularly monitoring and assessing the situation closely in the Nordic countries.
- 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

- Outside Europe, for example South Korea and Iran have reported thousands of cases. More than a thousand cases have been reported in the United States as well.
- 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.
- So far, nearly 5,000 people have died from the virus, with the majority of these deaths – over 3,100 – occurring in China. The vast majority of infected people have recovered.
- [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 1-12 days, on average approximately 5-6 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.
- 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](#) 

## MORE INFORMATION

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

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