

**INFECTIOUS DISEASES** 

## Coronavirus COVID-19

### – Latest Updates

**Updated on 17 March at 16:20.**

- At the beginning of the year, an epidemic caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19 began in China.
- So far, over 173 000 cases have been diagnosed globally. A total of 152 countries have reported infections.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus epidemic a pandemic on 11 March 2020.
- COVID-19 epidemics have developed quickly in many places around the world, and the situation in Europe is also changing rapidly.
- THL is monitoring and assessing the situation together with the European Centre for Disease Prevention (ECDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

**See also:**

- [Frequently asked questions about coronavirus COVID-19](#)
- [Information about the disease: Coronavirus COVID-19](#)

### The situation in Finland

- In Finland, COVID-19 cases have been diagnosed both among tourists infected elsewhere and those infected here in Finland. Currently,

there are only a few cases for which the origin cannot be traced. Most of the COVID-19 cases diagnosed in Finland have been mild. Some of those infected have also required hospital care.

- 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.
- The Government, together with the President of the Republic, have declared a state of emergency in Finland due to the coronavirus situation. On Tuesday 17 March, the Government will submit a proposal to Parliament on the implementation of the Emergency Powers Act.
- The Government's measures outlined on 16 March include the closure of schools, educational institutions and universities, restrictions to public meetings, mobility and visits to health care units, and increases to social welfare and health care capacity. In addition, the borders of Finland will be closed. These measures will remain in force until 13 April 2020. [Government press release](#).
- Rapid identification of cases continues to be important in order to slow down the progress of the epidemic.
- Finnish hospitals are well prepared for examining and treating coronavirus infections in isolation.

## Infections diagnosed in Finland

- So far, 319 laboratory-confirmed cases caused by the new coronavirus (COVID-19) have been diagnosed in Finland.
- The sampling criteria for COVID-19 have been changed. With suspected

infections, samples are primarily taken from patients with severe respiratory tract infection symptoms and from healthcare and social welfare personnel. Samples from people with mild symptoms returning from trips are still taken at the discretion of a physician. Asymptomatic people are not tested.

- Other Nordic countries, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom among others have also shifted to a similar sampling strategy.
- For example, health care personnel returning from abroad have been tested with a low threshold, provided that there is sufficient capacity, in order to prevent the spread of infections in health care.
- Confirmed cases can be divided by hospital district as follows (in alphabetical order):
  - South Karelia Social and Health Care District (Eksote): 4
  - Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia (EPSHP): 2
  - South Savo Hospital District (ESSOTE): 5
  - Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS): 180
  - Kanta-Häme Hospital District (KHSHP): 13
  - Central Ostrobothnia Hospital District (SOITE): 2
  - Central Finland Health Care District (KSSHP): 15
  - Lapland Hospital District (LSPH): 3
  - Western Ostrobothnia Hospital District (LPSHP): 2
  - Pirkanmaa Hospital District (PSHP): 25
  - North Karelia Hospital District (PKSSK): 6
  - Northern Ostrobothnia Hospital District (PPSHP): 28
  - North Savo Hospital District (PSSH): 3

- Päijät-Häme Hospital District (PHHYKY): 1
  - Satakunta Hospital District: 9
  - Vaasa Hospital District (VSHP): 4
  - Southwest Finland Hospital District (VSSHP): 15
  - Regional information not confirmed: 1
- We publish the statistics every day with the laboratory-confirmed cases reported by the hospital districts. There may be a delay with the reported numbers. For a few cases, regional information has been corrected, and this information may still be further specified. The latest figures describing the number of infections are not fully comparable with the previous figures. Hospital districts are testing for coronavirus according to their resources, following the instructions of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare
  - 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.

## The situation in Europe

- In Europe, the COVID-19 epidemic is expanding rapidly in Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Switzerland. More than 63 000 cases have been reported in Europe.
- The majority of European cases have been reported in Italy, where the current total is close to 28 000. The health care system in Italy is severely overburdened.
- Many European countries have closed their borders to prevent or slow down the epidemic.
- 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)

## The situation with the epidemic outside Europe

- Elsewhere in the world, the epidemic continues and the number of cases is increasing in many countries, including Iran and the United States.
- In the United States, the number of cases probably far exceeds the reported figures.
- The number of reported cases worldwide has exceeded the figures reported by China. China has reported over 81 000 cases, and the epidemic there appears to have subsided.
- So far, more than 7 000 people have died from the virus, with over 3 200 of these deaths occurring in China. The vast majority of infected people have recovered.
- [Number of cases in different countries](#) (WHO)

## 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.
- [COVID-19 \(ECDC\)](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(WHO\)](#)

## Guidelines for tourists

- Due to the exceptional situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs recommends avoiding all travel for the time being.
- The Ministry of Transport and Communications and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health have made an agreement with Finnish telephone operators and the Emergency Response Centre Agency that all passengers returning to Finland from abroad will receive a text message concerning coronavirus: “Coronavirus information: When arriving from abroad, arrange a period of absence (recommended length of 14 days) with your workplace, place of study and day care. Information about coronavirus at THL.fi.
- [Number of cases in different countries](#) (WHO)

## THL guidelines for health care

- [Guidelines for suspected Infections of the novel coronavirus COVID-19](#) (in Finnish)
- [Laboratory tests for coronavirus COVID-19](#)
- [Combating coronavirus infections in long-term care units](#)

## Instructions for workplaces

- [Guidelines for workers to prevent novel coronavirus infection](#) (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health)
- [Instructions for cleaning to prevent COVID-19 infections](#) (in Finnish) (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health)
- [Instructions for wastewater operators – no special risk of infection](#) (in Finnish) (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health)

- [Instructions for companies to prepare for the coronavirus epidemic by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health](#)

## Quarantine and isolation: forms

[Form templates for decisions related to quarantine and isolation \(in Finnish, Swedish and English\)](#)

## Instructions for citizens

- [Instructions for treating coronavirus at home](#)
- [Coronavirus: when to seek treatment](#)

## Communication materials on the prevention of coronavirus

[Instructions for hand and coughing hygiene](#)

 [Print](#)

### WHAT'S NEW

17 Mar 2020

[Coronavirus can cause anxiety in adults and children alike - How to take care of yourself and your loved ones](#)

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

[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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