

INFECTIOUS DISEASES 

Coronavirus COVID-19

– Latest Updates

Updated on 19 March at 15:50.

- At the beginning of the year, an epidemic caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19 began in China.
- So far, over 200,000 cases in total have been diagnosed globally. A total of 166 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 has been changing rapidly in Europe as well.
- 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. So far, there are still only a few reported cases whose 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.
- The measures outlined by the Government will be implemented in accordance with the Emergency Powers Act, the Communicable Diseases Act and other relevant legislation. The measures include the closure of schools, educational institutions and universities, restrictions to public meetings and gatherings, mobility and visits to health care units, and increases to social welfare and health care capacity. Finland has reinstated border checks to all its borders, and border traffic will be restricted as of 19 March.
- These measures will remain in force until 13 April 2020.
- [Measures outlined by the Government.](#)
- 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, approximately 400 laboratory-confirmed cases caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) have been diagnosed in Finland. This figure is based on laboratory-confirmed figures collected by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare by communicating directly with hospital districts.
- In the future, the number of cases will be solely based on figures obtained through the National Infectious Diseases Register. The changed data collection method is described in more detail below.
- A total of 304 cases have been reported to the National Infectious Diseases Register.
- 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, so as to prevent the spread of infections in health care.
- The data collection method for laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infections has changed. Previously, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare has collected data on laboratory-confirmed coronavirus infections by communicating directly with hospital districts. As of 19 March 2020, the data will be collected electronically, based on the coronavirus cases reported to the National Infectious Diseases Register.

In the future, the number of cases and maps presented on this page will be solely based on information obtained through the National Infectious Diseases Register. Initially, reported cases and figures may be subject to delays and regional variation.

- 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 THL's instructions. The figures in the National Infectious Diseases Register only show a certain percentage of infections, as not everyone with mild symptoms are tested.

The situation in Europe

- In Europe, the COVID-19 epidemic is extensively ongoing in Italy, Spain, France, Germany and Switzerland as well as many other countries.
- Over 85,000 cases have been diagnosed in Europe.
- A large share of the cases reported in Europe has been diagnosed in Italy, over 35,000. 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. For example, more than 1200 cases have been reported in Sweden. 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.
- In China, the epidemic appears to have subsided. China has reported over 82,000 coronavirus cases.
- So far, 8600 people have died from the virus, with over 3200 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 circumstances caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs recommends avoiding all travel abroad for the time being.
- Finnish travellers are advised to return to Finland as soon as possible.
- Finns and permanent residents of Finland returning from abroad are advised to live in conditions that correspond to quarantine for a period of two weeks after their return.
- [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



WHAT'S NEW

19 Mar 2020

[The Corona Epidemic Modelling:
Limiting human contacts affects the
duration of the epidemic and the
number of daily infections](#)

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](#)

[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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