

**INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

## Coronavirus COVID-19

### – Latest Updates

**Updated on 20 March at 16:35.**

- At the beginning of the year, an epidemic caused by the new coronavirus COVID-19 began in China.
- So far, approximately 210,000 cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed globally. A total of 168 countries have reported infections.
- 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.

- At this stage, THL will not provide more detailed information on the health status of patients.
- Finnish hospitals are well prepared for examining and treating coronavirus infections in isolation.
- 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.](#)

## Infections diagnosed in Finland

- By 20 March, approximately 450 laboratory-confirmed cases of novel

coronavirus (COVID-19) have been diagnosed in Finland. This figure is based on laboratory-confirmed figures collected manually by THL directly from the hospital districts.

- By 20 March, a total of 409 cases have been reported to the National Infectious Diseases Register.
- Of the reported cases, 61% are men and 39% women.

## On the reporting of infections and sample numbers

- As of 19 March 2020, graph data have been collected electronically from laboratory-confirmed cases of coronavirus reported to the National Infectious Diseases Register.
- In the future, the number of cases and graphs presented on this page will be solely based on information obtained through the National Infectious Diseases Register.
- The actual number of COVID-19 infections in Finland is likely higher than reported.
- Initially, there will be delays and regional variations in notifications and in the reporting of figures. Hospital districts and THL are working together to ensure that the National Infectious Diseases Register is up to date as quickly as possible.

## Testing in Finland

- By 20 March, approximately 6,500 patients meeting the sampling criteria have been tested in Finland.
- 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.
- With suspected infections, samples are primarily taken from patients with

severe respiratory tract infection symptoms and from healthcare and social welfare personnel. Samples are also taken from people with mild symptoms and those returning from abroad at the discretion of their physician. Asymptomatic people are not tested.

- At the moment, testing for COVID-19 is predominantly being carried out on patients and those groups of people whose health requires monitoring or if it is important for their line of work. People who have contracted COVID-19, but only have mild symptoms can stay home to recover.
- THL is also testing samples collected for influenza laboratory based sample monitoring for coronavirus. So far, more than 220 samples have been tested and have proved negative.
- Other Nordic countries, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom among others have also shifted to a similar sampling strategy.

## 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.
- A total of more than 100,000 cases have been diagnosed in Europe.
- A large share of the cases reported in Europe has been diagnosed in Italy – more than 41,000 cases – and Italy's healthcare system 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, a total of over 4,800 cases. 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 is continuing and the number of cases is increasing in many countries, including the United States.
- In China, the epidemic appears to have subsided. China has reported over 82,000 coronavirus cases.
- So far, nearly 8,800 people have died from the virus worldwide, with the majority of these deaths – over 3,200 – occurring in China. The vast majority of infected people have recovered.
- [Number of cases in different countries](#) (WHO)

## International risk assessment

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus epidemic a pandemic on 11 March 2020.
- 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)

## Media enquiries

We are currently receiving a very large number of interview requests regarding coronavirus.

Please send all interview requests by **email** to [info\(at\)thl.fi](mailto:info@thl.fi) or by **telephone** to +358 29 524 6161. The telephone number serves customers on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. After 4 p.m., requests can be sent by e-mail.



### 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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